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# VELAZQUEZ

## A STUDY OF HIS LIFE & ART

WALTER ARMSTRONG

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For out of olde feldes as men seith
Cometh al this newe corn fro yeer to yere
And out of olde bokes in good feith
Cometh al this newe science that men lere

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# VELAZQUEZ

## *A STUDY OF HIS LIFE AND ART*

*By*

WALTER ARMSTRONG

*Director of the National Gallery of Ireland*

*With many Illustrations*

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PART I

# *THE LIFE OF VELAZQUEZ*

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# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## *PLATES*


PAGE

Prince Ferdinand in hunting costume, Museo del Prado . . . *Frontispiece*

The Forge of Vulcan. Museo del Prado . . . . . 38

The Infante Balthazar Carlos. Museo del Prado . . . . . 50

The Tapestry Workers. Museo del Prado . . . . . 94


## *ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT*


Portrait of Velazquez. Collection of Sir Francis Cook. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery . . . . . 9

The Aguador, or Water-seller. Collection of the Duke of Wellington. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery . . 13

The Adoration of the Shepherds. National Gallery . . . . . 15

Philip IV. National Gallery . . . . . 29

The Count-Duke Olivares. After Velazquez, with a border by Rubens. From the Engraving by Paul Pontius . . . . . 33

Juan de Pareja. Collection of the Earl of Carlisle. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery . . . . . 39

The Boar Hunt. National Gallery . . . . . 45

Philip IV. on Horseback. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent . . . . . 53

The Riding School. Collection of the Duke of Westminster. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery . . . . 55

The Infante Balthazar Carlos, with a Page. Collection of the Earl of Carlisle. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery . 57

The Count-Duke Olivares. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 59

PAGE

Admiral Pulido da Pareja. National Gallery . . . . . 61

The Wife of Velazquez. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 64

The Family of Velazquez. Imperial Gallery, Vienna. From a Photograph by Löwy. . . . . 65

Christ at the Pillar. National Gallery . . . . . 67

The Daughter of Velazquez. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 69

Pope Innocent X. Doria-Pamfili Palace, Rome. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 75

Pope Innocent X. Collection of the Duke of Wellington . . . 77

Philip IV. (bust). National Gallery . . . . . 83

The Infanta Margarita. Imperial Gallery, Vienna. From a Photograph by Löwy 85

The Infante Prosper. Imperial Gallery, Vienna. From a Photograph by Löwy 87

The Dwarf Don Antonio. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 89

Mœnippus. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 91

Æsop. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. 95

Mercury and Argus. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Sketch by Walter Osborne . . . . . 97

Coronation of the Virgin. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. . . . . 99

Equestrian Statue of Velazquez at Paris. By M. Frémiet. From a Photograph by Fiorillo . . . . . 101

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Velazquez. pinx. Braun Clément & Cie. ph. sc

*Prince Ferdinand in Hunting Costume.*

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# THE LIFE OF VELAZQUEZ

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS AT SEVILLE

1599-1623

Few cities of the world suggest by their very names the poetry of a picturesque past more vividly than Seville. After five centuries of Catholic rule, it still retains the impress of its Arab masters, its character as a meeting-place of East and West, where buildings, customs, and traditions proclaim the fusion of the hardy Gothic spirit with the exotic culture and magnificence of the Moorish genius. Jaber's tower still divides the traveller's interest with the great Cathedral; the marble courts and fountains of the East are common features of the houses; the convents and palaces were once the homes of Moorish kings; and in the architecture of the Christian churches built during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the mingling of Gothic elements with the Saracenic arch seems to deliberately symbolise the marriage of alien races. Nowhere, indeed, has the scent of the roses clung more persistently to the broken vase than in Seville.

The geographical position of the city marked it out from early times for a centre of commercial enterprise. The Guadalquivir gave it not only easy access to the sea, but a water-way for inland transport. Long before the discovery of the New World, Seville was the most flourishing city of the peninsula, but after the conquest of Mexico and Peru, its wealth and importance were vastly increased. The Silver Fleet unloaded in the port, galleons freighted with Spanish pistoles, and

> argosies
> Laden with spice and silks

brought their precious cargoes to her quays. Auctions were held in

the public streets of slaves, and silver-work, and costly textiles. Before the building of the Exchange, the *plaza* in front of the Cathedral was the meeting-place of merchants whose trade was the very poetry of commerce, like that of Marlow's

> Merchants of the Indian mines,
> That trade in metal of the purest gold;
> Or wealthy Moor, that in the Eastern rocks,
> Without control can pick his riches up
> And in his house keeps pearls like pebble stones.

A great colonial trade sprang up under the direction of the *Casa de Contratacion*, and the vast possibilities of the Indian markets began to attract the adventurous. Immigrants of all races, whose memory survives in the names of those quarters of the city in which they lived, mingled with the native populace on the quays and in the streets. Far from despising this activity as plebeian, the nobles took an active part in commerce. Great fortunes were built up, enabling their owners to adorn the city with sumptuous buildings, to encourage art and letters, to enjoy life in a cultured and luxurious society.

The numerous churches and monasteries attested the devout spirit on which the Sevillians prided themselves. Their religious zeal may have been a half-conscious survival of the struggle with the Moors, which the Catholic Church regarded mainly as a crusade waged by the followers of Christ against the infidel. The Sevillians proved themselves in a peculiar degree the worshippers of the Madonna. They claimed to be the earliest champions of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The building of their great Cathedral extended over a century (1413-1508), and was carried on by successive generations of zealous churchmen, who patronised innumerable artists, both native and foreign. Works of practical piety were not neglected, and wealthy benefactors founded asylums for the poor and hospitals for the suffering.

The University was founded by Pier Afan de Ribera (died 1455), a soldier who passed his life fighting against the Moors. Such a combination of military and civil interests was no more uncommon in the Spain of the fifteenth and sixteenth century than among the princely

*condottieri* of Northern Italy. Many of the Sevillian poets and dramatists were men of action, who wielded sword and pen indifferently. The annals of the city enshrined the names of a long array of such writers, and of scholars, theologians, connoisseurs, collectors of curiosities and antiques. Hernando de Herrera, the poet (born 1534), and Benito Montañes, the scholar and linguist (born 1498), to whom Philip II. entrusted the production of the famous polyglot Bible printed by Plantin, are the most notable among these worthies, among whom honourable mention must also be made of Hernan Colon, the son of Columbus, who bequeathed to the Cathedral a library of 20,000 volumes which he had collected in his travels through Europe. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Italian culture had obtained a firm footing in Seville, and the Latin and later Italian poets were widely read and imitated. Art and literature went hand in hand in this direction. Spanish painters visited Rome, adopted the manner of the Roman School, and were employed on the decoration of the Sistine Chapel and in Santa Trinità dei Monti. Some, such as Ribera and Ruviales, made their homes permanently in Italy.

Painting in Seville, if we are to credit local history, is of great antiquity. Three colossal presentments of the Virgin are extant, which are confidently asserted to date from the era of the early Christians! But setting pictures aside, authentic relics exist from the period of Ferdinand III.'s conquest (1248) which attest the early activity of religious art. These are the two statues of the Virgin known as the Virgin de las Betallas and the Virgin de la Vega. The building of the Cathedral naturally gave a great impulse to such an activity. Foreigners from Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands were attracted to the work, and left permanent traces of their presence on the national art. Flemings in particular found a cordial welcome, not only in Seville, but throughout the Spain of this period. They introduced the new fashion of painting in oil, which was eagerly adopted by Spanish artists, and commissions from Spanish patrons flowed in upon the workshops of the Netherlandish painters. The works of Juan Sanchez de Castro, Alejo Fernandez, and Juan Nuñez, who flourished at the close of the fifteenth century, and whose pictures may be studied in the churches of Seville, proclaim this Flemish tendency. But the movement was

short-lived. A reaction set in, and early in the sixteenth century the far-reaching influence of the Italian Renaissance laid its spell on Seville. "All the great men produced by Spain in painting and sculpture," says Pacheco, "chose the way pointed out by Michelangelo, Raphael, and their schools." The chief exponents of the new manner in Seville were the Bruxellois, Peeter de Kempeneer (whose name is transformed in the sonorous Spanish tongue to Pedro Campaña), Luis de Vargas (the imitator of Perino del Vaga) and his pupil Villegas, and Pablo de Cespedes. This exotic art, which had no root in national life and sentiment, had the seeds of decay in it from the beginning. The year made memorable by the birth of Velazquez found it already obsolete, and surviving only in the feeble canvases of Pacheco, Vazquez, and a few kindred spirits.

Two artists of a very different mould had meanwhile arisen in Seville to be the pioneers of the great national school of the seventeenth century. The greater of the two was Juan de las Roelas, "the first," says Justi, "to combine naturalism with mysticism, the two elements whose fusion imparted its special character to the Sevillian painting of the next generation." His works are to be found in the Cathedral and churches, and in the Hospital de la Sangre, and mark an extraordinary advance when compared with the decaying art of the mannerists. Francisco de Herrera, though not in the strict sense a pupil of Roelas, adopted his manner, overlaying it, however, with the extravagance of his own fierce and sombre temperament. In his later works, examples of which are in the Seville Museum, this turbid spirit dominates him completely, revealing itself in eccentricities in which "he casts off the rules of art as a maniac does his clothes." Herrera had great natural aptitudes, combined, if we may believe what we hear of him, with such a lack of all sweetness and light that it is a question whether he was not indeed a madman. His children fled from his tyranny, his son seeking an asylum in Italy, his daughter in a convent. His gloomy figure is a memorable one in Spanish art, not only for its own sake, but as that of the first master of Velazquez.

Herrera's contemporary and fellow-student, Francisco Pacheco, was in all respects his antithesis. The prosperous member of a distinguished

family, archæologist, poet, and critic rather than painter, he was a belated mannerist, whose frigid and feeble productions are in curious contrast

*Portrait of Velazquez. Collection of Sir Francis Cook.*
*From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery.*

to the vehement art of his contemporary. In his later works there is a slight increase of vitality, due, it is said, to the quickening influence

of visits paid in 1611 to Madrid, where he studied the original works of the great Italians he worshipped, and to Toledo, where he made the acquaintance of the wonderful Greek, Theotocopuli. His most valuable bequests to posterity were his *Arte de la Pintura*, a treatise full of curious learning and interesting glimpses of contemporary art-history, and his *Libro de Retratos*, an iconography of distinguished Sevillians. After his return from Madrid, he opened a school of painting which became not only a popular academy, but a favourite resort of the most cultured persons in Seville.

From this hasty sketch of the stage on which the greatest of Spanish —some will say, the greatest of all—painters made his *début*, we can form some idea of the conditions under which his genius made its start in life. More favoured than many great artists, his lines fell to him in pleasant places; he opened his eyes on a world full both of natural and of man-created beauty, on sunshine, wealth, and pleasure, on a world in which his vocation was under no disability, but was accepted as honourable and dignified. His native city, if it could not vie with the Florence of Michelangelo or the Venice of Titian, might fairly take its place with the Antwerp of Rubens, or the Amsterdam of Rembrandt van Ryn.

Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez was born at Seville, in the house known as No. 8 Calle de Gorgoja, in 1599, the birth year of Vandyck. June 5 is the generally accepted date, for his baptism appears from the parish registers to have taken place at the Church of San Pedro on June 6. The Archives of the Order of Sant' Iago in Uclès show that his grandfather, Diego Rodriguez de Silva, belonged to an ancient and honourable family of Portugal, whose estates at Quinta de Silva were some eight or nine miles from Oporto. A reverse of fortune caused him to move with his wife from his native Oporto to Seville, where their son Juan, the painter's father, was born. The said son eventually took to wife Geronima Velazquez, the daughter of a Sevillian noble. The artist was therefore of gentle birth on both sides. His family were reckoned *hidalgos*, or members of the *petite noblesse*, and entitled to use the style of Don, but this privilege they seem to have allowed to lapse. It is recorded, in evidence of their spotless descent, that

familiars of the Holy Office had been chosen from both the Silva and the Velazquez families.

The painter's real surname was, of course, Silva. But the supersession of the father's by the mother's patronymic was by no means unusual in Andalusia, and it has been suggested that it was probably adopted by Velazquez as carrying greater weight in Seville than the Portuguese "Silva."

The youthful Diego, as one of his biographers quaintly tells us, was nurtured by his parents "on the milk of the fear of the Lord." He was further sent to imbibe nurture of a more mundane sort at the Grammar School of his native city. Here he showed the usual boyish precocity, covering his copy-books with hints at his future greatness. His quick intelligence gave his parents a lofty idea of his gifts, and though the profession of painter was not a usual one for a youth of his rank to adopt, they seem to have acquiesced from the first in his wish to become an artist. He was allowed to leave his other studies to enter the studio of Francisco Herrera, the turbulent individual whom lovers of analogy have christened the "Michelangelo of Seville." He was rather, perhaps, the Torrigiano, though we do not hear that he broke Diego's nose! His violence, however, soon scared away his pupil, who passed from his school into that of the milder Pacheco. It is not precisely known how long Velazquez remained with Herrera. Justi assumes that it was no more than a twelvemonth from the beginning of his noviciate in 1612. Between pictures, however, ascribed to the crazy master and the later work of his celebrated scholar points of resemblance exist which seem to point to a longer connection. Under Pacheco, at any rate, Velazquez studied diligently for five years, and in 1618 entered into still closer relations with his master by his marriage with Pacheco's daughter, Juana de Miranda. "After five years of education and training I married him to my daughter, induced by his youth, integrity, and good qualities, and the prospects of his great natural genius." It is to Pacheco's honour that he was able from the first to appreciate an art so essentially the opposite of his own. In his *Arte de la Pintura* he practically claims the sole credit for Velazquez's training, but short as the latter's sojourn with Herrera was, the vigour of that truculent master left a more decisive impress on his art. Pacheco, in spite of his limitations

as a painter, was an excellent teacher. He seems to have been one of those uninspired but conscientious theorists who often prove more successful as masters than their betters. Unable to dominate his brilliant pupil, he was capable of directing him. Ford, in his article on Velazquez in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, maintains, indeed, that Pacheco had no influence of any kind on Velazquez, and that "the principles of Herrera's method are to be traced in all the works of his pupil, improved indeed by a higher quality of touch and intention." But though Pacheco's works were poor and wooden, and little regarded even by his contemporaries, the principles he lays down in his handbook are sound and judicious, and their application is to be traced in every picture of Velazquez. Drawing he declares to be "the life and soul of painting . . . here are needed courage and steadfastness; here giants themselves have a lifelong struggle, in which they can never for a moment lay aside their arms." To such advice Velazquez no doubt owed much of his delicate and unerring draughtsmanship. A third influence probably counted for something in his development, that of Luis Tristan of Toledo, a pupil of El Greco, whose art a distinguished French critic has described as "a continuation of El Greco, and an anticipation of Velazquez." Nature was, however, the most insistent of the young Diego's teachers. He drew unceasingly from the model, and the fervour and sincerity with which he threw himself into Pacheco's "lifelong struggle," is attested by the quality of his early work. "He kept a peasant lad as an apprentice, who for payment served him as a model in various attitudes and postures, weeping, laughing, in all imaginable parts. After this model he drew many heads in charcoal and chalk on blue paper, and made similar studies after many other natives, thereby acquiring his sure hand in hitting off likenesses." Such earnestness bore fruit in the mastery that distinguishes the *Water-Carrier* at Apsley House, the *Adoration of the Kings* in the Madrid Museum, and the much finer *Adoration of the Shepherds* in our own National Gallery, all painted while the artist was yet in his teens.

His earliest independent works were *bodegones*—kitchen and tavern scenes which appealed to those realistic tendencies of Spanish art which began to show themselves in the early seventeenth century. In their treatment of such things, Spanish painters evinced a Dutch power of observa-

tion, an uncompromising realism, and a strange disregard for decorative effect. The most famous work of this class by Velazquez is the *Water-*

*The Aguador, or Water-seller. Collection of the Duke of Wellington. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery.*

*Carrier* above mentioned. The master took it with him when he first went to Madrid, and on the completion of the new palace of Buen

Retiro, it was chosen to hang in one of the rooms. It passed thence to the new Bourbon palace, and together with Correggio's *Agony in the Garden* was carried off by Joseph Buonaparte in his flight to Vittoria. When, after the battle, these two pictures fell into the hands of the Duke of Wellington, he proposed to restore them to Spain, but King Ferdinand begged his acceptance of both as personal gifts.

The composition of the *Aguador*, as the early picture is called, is extremely simple. The chief figure in the group of three is the water-seller himself, a member of that guild of *aguadores* whose function it was to water the parched streets of the city during the summer months, and, throughout the year, to distribute the fresh water brought to the town in pipes from the Archbishop's Well. He stands before a rough table, his left hand on the great stoppered jar at his side, and in his right a glass goblet, which he hands to a fair-haired boy, who leans forward to take it. A second lad, of a swarthier and less refined type, drinks greedily from an earthen mug in the background. The painter's model is said to have been a Corsican, well known in Seville, where the *aguadores* belonged for the most part to the French colony. A striking effect is won by the easy and natural juxtaposition of the three heads, the weather-beaten face of the water-bearer contrasting with the smooth youthfulness of his boyish customers.

Apsley House is the home of another familiar study of the same period, but of inferior quality. It represents two young men in a sort of cave, seated at a table at the close of a frugal meal. One raises a wooden bowl to his lips; the other dozes, his head on his arm. Sir Francis Cook's so-called *Old Woman making an Omelet* approaches more closely to the *Water-Carrier*. A wrinkled peasant, standing at the brazier on which she is cooking eggs in a pan, just as you may see the same operation performed in the streets of Madrid or Seville to the present day, listens to some explanation made by her assistant, a mulatto lad. The kitchen utensils are painted with Dutch accuracy, although the general treatment is broad and even a little empty. This picture was exhibited by the owner at the New Gallery last winter, with another, claiming to be of the same style and period, *The Beggar with the Globe*. Justi has pronounced against the authenticity of this

picture, which he describes as a work of the Dutch School. In this opinion I concur, and would ask those who cling to the ascription to

*The Adoration of the Shepherds. National Gallery.*

Velazquez to explain the presence of a copy after a landscape by J. van Artois on the globe on which the so-called beggar leans.

Two famous religious subjects were painted by Velazquez when he was barely out of his apprenticeship, and was still more or less under the eye of Pacheco. These are the *Epiphany* in the Prado, and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in our own National Gallery. The first bears the date 1619. The second, undated, is of the same period, perhaps a little later, to judge by a greater breadth and vigour in the brushing. The catalogue describes it as "an early work in the simple, naturalistic manner of the painter, in the style of Spagnoletto"; and Justi goes so far as to say that the types are directly copied from those of the Valencian master. The evident reminiscences of Ribera make it, indeed, a work apart in the very individual *œuvre* of Velazquez, and have sometimes caused it to be looked upon with suspicion. A Spanish critic has even pronounced it an early Zurbaran. It was bought by Baron Taylor for Louis Philippe from the Conde del Aquila, in whose family it had remained from the time when it was painted, and was acquired by the National Gallery at the sale of the French king's collection in London in 1853. Contemporary with these two pictures were the companion pieces painted for the Chapter-House of the Carmelite Friars, *St. John the Evangelist at Patmos*, and the *Woman pursued by the Dragon.*

A great impetus had been given to devotional painting by the Dominican movement in support of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, sanctioned by Paul V. in a brief of 1617. Religious establishments had multiplied in an extraordinary manner throughout Spain under the rule of Philip III., and nowhere more conspicuously than in Seville, where one great monastery after another rose in the early years of the seventeenth century. In these new foundations there was a natural zeal to do something for the glorification of the lately-formulated dogma, and the artist was called in to represent the apotheosis of the Queen of Heaven. For all such pictures there was a prescribed form. The theme being the sanctity and spotlessness of Mary, those more human aspects of her legend which had inspired the great Italians from Giotto downwards were set aside for the mystic vision of the Apocalypse—the "woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." It was, no doubt, the connection between Velazquez and the influential Pacheco which secured a commission of

such unusual importance for so young an artist. Though the prescribed conditions ensured a certain uniformity in all pictures of the kind, his characteristic realism asserted itself in his Virgin and his Evangelist, both faithful studies from models of no very exalted type. The Mary is an Andalusian peasant girl, sedate and pious, but far from beautiful; the Evangelist a swarthy, black-bearded, young man of Moorish origin. The pictures were removed from the monastery to preserve them from destruction by rioters, and were handed over in 1809 to Sir Bartle Frere, the English ambassador at Madrid, in whose family they still remain.

The first three years of the married life of Velazquez seem to have been happy and uneventful. Two daughters were born to him—Francisca on May 18, 1619, Ignacia on January 19, 1621. The latter died in infancy. Secure in the prospect of more local patronage, like that which had already fallen to his share, the young painter may have looked forward contentedly to a career in his native place. Seville had nourished many notable artists, and the beautiful city, with its busy and varied life, could have been no prison-house to genius. But a wider destiny was shaping itself before him. On March 31, 1621, the *fainéant* Philip III. died suddenly, and was succeeded by his son, a youth of fourteen. The prompt assumption of personal authority by the young king was followed by one of those administrative revolutions that set new forces in motion in every department of society. The late king's favourite, the tyrant Lerma, and all his faction, were ignominiously dismissed. A new era dawned for the country, and new men pressed eagerly to the front. Several Sevillians of distinction rose into favour at the new court. Olivares himself, the young king's friend and gentleman-in-waiting, had lived for some time in Seville, where he had formed an intimacy with the poet, Francisco de Rioja. Rioja was one of the choice spirits of Pacheco's circle. His name appears as one of the witnesses to the marriage of Velazquez. Later, when Olivares was at the height of his power, Rioja was summoned to Madrid, where the Minister employed him as a sort of aide-de-camp throughout his long administration. By his advice, perhaps, Pacheco, who had formed the highest opinion of his son-in-law's genius, despatched the young painter on a sort of voyage of discovery to Madrid. Diego or his father-in-law seem previously to have had relations with their fellow-citizens in the capital, for on his arrival in April 1622 he

was very courteously received by two members of a distinguished family, Don Luis and Don Melchior del Alcazar. The introduction which proved of greatest service to him, however, was one to Don Juan de Fonseca, Canon of Seville, who held the office of *Sumiller de cortina* in the royal household. The duties of this office, an office generally bestowed on one of the clergy, were to superintend the arrangements for the king's attendance at mass, to wait on him in the chapel, and to raise or drop the curtain (*cortina*) when necessary. Fonseca was a lover of the arts, in which he seems to have dabbled himself. He and other friendly courtiers made an effort to introduce Velazquez to the king, but in vain, and Diego returned to Seville. His only achievement of any importance during this first visit to the capital was a portrait of the poet, Luis de Gongora, painted at the request of Pacheco. It attracted much favourable notice at Madrid, and is perhaps to be identified with the portrait numbered 1085[1] in the Prado Gallery.

Fonseca, meanwhile, was despatched on a diplomatic mission to Italy. On his return he made another attempt in favour of his young *protégé*, and this time with better success. The sympathies of Olivares were enlisted, and in the spring of 1623, Fonseca wrote, conveying a request from the Minister that Diego should return to Madrid at his expense, for which purpose he made a grant of fifty ducats. The hoped-for goal now seemed within a reasonable distance, and Pacheco showed his confidence in his pupil's future by shutting up his house in Seville and going with him to Madrid. There Velazquez was lodged and boarded in Fonseca's own house. He seems to have left his wife to await events in Seville, for after his success with the first equestrian portrait of the king, he was cordially invited by Olivares to bring his family to Madrid.

His first commission after his return to the capital was the portrait of his patron, Fonseca. This picture cannot now be identified, and we have no means of judging an achievement which excited much enthusiasm at the court. On the day of its completion it was carried off to the palace by Count Peñaranda, Chamberlain to the king's brother, the Infante Don Fernando. The king, the prince, and the whole house-

[1] Many confusing changes have been made in the numbering of the pictures in the Prado Gallery. Those here given refer, in all cases, to the last edition of Señor Madrazo's catalogue.

hold inspected it, and expressed their admiration. It was decided that the painter should receive the honour of a royal commission forthwith. Don Ferdinand was at first chosen to sit, but it was finally agreed that the king himself should be painted. The execution of the portrait was delayed, however, owing to the king's engagement in weighty matters of State. The year 1623, it will be remembered, was that in which the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I., spent a momentous six months in Madrid, in an abortive wooing of the king's sister, Maria. The Prince sat to Velazquez before leaving the capital, and the artist made a sketch, for which Charles paid him one hundred escudos. It may have been designed as a souvenir for the Infanta, for the Prince did not bring it with him to England. No further mention of it can be traced, and the picture itself has long disappeared. It would have been interesting to compare such a work with Vandyck's stately and poetic renderings.

It was not until August 30, 1623, three days before Charles's departure, that Philip found time to fulfil his engagement. Velazquez painted a life-size portrait, on horseback, in a landscape. This, too, has disappeared. It was displaced in 1686, probably to make room for some other work by the same hand, and may have perished in the fire of 1734. The king, the Infante, and in particular Olivares, expressed their great satisfaction with the painter. Olivares summoned him to an audience, in which he overflowed with compliments, promising that Velazquez alone should paint the king in future. The portrait was then publicly exhibited in the Calle Mayor, opposite to the Church of San Felipe, "to the admiration of the capital and envy of those of the profession," says Pacheco. It was arranged that the young man should make his home permanently in Madrid, and he left the Minister's presence full of hopes, which, high as they were, were not destined to be disappointed.

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST PERIOD AT MADRID AND FIRST VISIT TO ITALY

### 1623–1631

Until the time of Philip II., Madrid was a small fortified city, chiefly remarkable as having once served the Moors as an outpost of Toledo. It was captured for Christendom in 1083. The Castilian kings had a residence there which they occasionally used for hunting in the Pardo, but this was demolished when its permanent occupation by the court made an increase of accommodation necessary. The Alcazar was then turned into a regular royal palace. The keen air of the lofty plateau on which the city stands was found by Charles V. to suit his gouty constitution, and he determined to make it his chief domicile.

Madrid is now considered one of the most unhealthy spots in Spain, a result brought about by the ruthless denudation of the country round. In the sixteenth century the undulating plain over which the eye travels from the belvederes of the capital was not the expanse of brown earth, scarcely masked by scanty herbage, it now is. It was a waving forest, the shelter of wild boars and other game, and a defence to the soil against excessive desiccation. The great rise in the population of the city under Philip II. and his successor increased enormously the demand for fuel, and so the woods were sacrificed. No attempt to repair the loss by replanting was made until the time of Philip IV., when the uplands had already been shaved bare. Beyond its stimulating climate, the site had few advantages. Philip II., however, exerted himself to the utmost for the extension and improvement of his new capital, and Madrid remained until comparatively recent times the city he had created.

Attracted by the presence of the court, the nobles of Toledo and Valladolid found their way thither. These Philip II. encouraged, by a variety of concessions and privileges, to build houses for themselves, and in spite of its inconvenient situation, the difficulties of transporting supplies, and the consequent dearness of living, the city developed rapidly, and soon became the busy centre of national life—the heart of that huge body corporate, the Spanish Empire of the sixteenth century. The Spaniards prided themselves on the cosmopolitan character of their capital, on its influence, its hospitality, its commercial prosperity, in a word on its fulfilment of the duties, as then understood, of the metropolis of a State whose subjects were of every race. The modern foreigner, fresh from London or Paris, may be staggered by the provincialism, the extraordinary monotony, and, above all, by the unpicturesqueness of Madrid; but to the Spaniard of the sixteenth century, used to the narrow lanes of Toledo or Seville, the regularity of plan due to its sudden creation, the command over a wide champaign given by its site, and that very freedom from signs of the Moorish domination which we dislike, must have been legitimate sources of pride and self-congratulation.

The arts, fostered by the Emperor Charles, commanded an intelligent and widespread recognition in the capital. Rich amateurs had formed collections of pictures and statues, gems and bronzes, which vied with those of the Italian princes. The collections of Pompeo Leoni (the son of the Italian sculptor Leone Leoni) and of Juan de Espinosa are famous in the annals of art. Hardly inferior in taste and knowledge to these *virtuosi*, great nobles themselves, such as the Counts Monterey, Leganes, and Villamediana, had turned their palaces into museums of rare and beautiful things. Italy was the storehouse whence most of these treasures were derived, and it is hardly surprising that the prevailing taste when Velazquez brought his genius from the south was less Spanish than Italian.

Such was the stage upon which Velazquez entered at the age of twenty-four, his genius recognised and his career already assured. A retaining fee of twenty ducats a month was granted him from the king's privy purse, in addition to the separate payments made for each

completed work. He also received an ecclesiastical sinecure, bringing in three hundred ducats a year. The income from this he seems, however, not to have enjoyed till three years later, when the preliminary dispensation required was granted by Urban VII. A further grant of three hundred ducats for expenses was made shortly after his appointment, and a private residence, valued at a rental of two hundred ducats, was given to him in the city. The Crown at this time reserved to itself the curious privilege of a right of occupation in the second story of private houses. The custom dated from the time of Philip II., who had claimed this concession as a set-off to the immunities enjoyed by those who built themselves dwellings in the city. The right was not infrequently enforced, and court officials, members of council and of foreign embassies, were thus economically lodged by the sovereign. To evade the infliction, many later buildings were planned with one story only. Whether Velazquez lived in one house throughout the long term of his career in Madrid is not certainly known, but existing records show that in his fortieth year he was established in the house of one Pedro de Yta, in the Calle de Concepcion Geronima, a street off the Calle de Toledo, deriving its name from a convent of Hieronymite nuns, founded by a noble lady of Madrid in 1504. The historic studio of the court-painters, where Philip II. had paid surprise visits in his dressing-gown to Antonio More and Sanchez Coello, was, however, in the palace itself, and here the master painted all his finest works.

This palace, the famous Alcazar of the Hapsburg dynasty and once the citadel of the Moors, no longer exists. It was a vast quadrilateral building, enlarged and improved by successive sovereigns from Pedro the Cruel to Philip IV., under whom it received its final shape. It first became the king's residence in the time of Philip II., who abandoned the old palace, on the site of which his sister Joanna founded a convent for the Barefooted Nuns. He enlarged it mainly by the addition of the south façade, with its suite of state-rooms, which doubled the width of the original south wing. He also added greatly to its imposing appearance by the construction of the great square in front, now the Plaza de Armas. This *place* still forms the approach to the chief entrance of the modern palace built on the site of the Alcazar. The present armoury, on a low site to the north of the existing palace, formerly belonged to

the stables, and is the only remnant left of the ancient building. The huge pile contained a world in itself, the whole business of the State being transacted within its walls. Ranged round two inner courts or *patios*, divided one from another by the royal chapel, were the council chambers, the offices, and audience halls, in which was carried on the business of the ten Boards, by whom were regulated the affairs of Castile, Aragon, Italy, Portugal, and Flanders. The guard-rooms, the assembly hall of the Cortes, the great galleries for public entertainments, the Treasury, the Exchequer, the private apartments used by the king and queen in winter and summer respectively, and those occupied by the inferior members of the royal family, as well as by various State officials, were also within its walls. The public was allowed free access to the eastern court, under the arcades of which painters set up their easels, and jewellers, booksellers, and other dealers in decorative wares plied their trade in booths, or at open stalls.

The interior of the palace is described by foreign visitors as dark and gloomy, after the sombre Spanish fashion. This gloom was, however, relieved by the magnificent Flemish tapestries, the finest collection in the world, with which the state-rooms, and even, on gala occasions, the halls and courts, were hung. In the summer the tapestries were replaced by pictures from the royal collections, chiefly by large decorative views, processions, and battle-pieces. Down to the time of Philip IV. the more precious examples, such as the Titians, were carefully guarded in the Treasury, but that king made more generous arrangements. The famous series of mythological subjects painted by the great Venetian for Philip II., framed, like all the royal pictures, in narrow black frames, were then hung in the loggia, or closed arcade, of the so-called Emperor's Garden, which was a hanging terrace adorned with copies of antique Roman busts representing the Emperors from Augustus to Domitian.

The painter's quarters were in the eastern wing of the building, in the Casa del Tesoro, or Treasury. One of the many secret passages which intersected the palace, and enabled the king to move about unperceived, connected the studio with the royal apartments. Philip had also, we are told, duplicate keys to every room in the building; and, following the example of his predecessors, he paid constant visits to the

painter to watch his progress. A special chair was reserved for his use, which he occupied nearly every day. He is said to have practised painting himself, and with some success, and probably many of the drawings and pictures by him praised by Spanish writers were executed during his visits to the master's studio. No examples of his skill have come down to us, however, or at least none recognised as by his hand.

The office Velazquez now entered upon was one in which he had had distinguished predecessors. Titian had been court painter to the Emperor Charles V., both in Italy and in Germany, and magnificent examples of his art had, as we have seen, found their way to Madrid, though he had never worked in the Spanish capital. Antony Mor, whom we call Sir Antonio More, and his imitator, Sanchez Coello, were limners to Philip II. The feeble character of Philip III. seems to have infected even the art which perpetuated his features. His painters were Coello's pupil, the mediocre, but not absolutely worthless, Pantoja de la Cruz, and the uninteresting Bartolomé Gonzalez, the latter of whom still retained his post at the accession of Philip IV. He died in 1627, and his place was filled by the Florentine, Angelo Nardi. Two other Tuscans, Vincenzo Carducho and Eugenio Caxesi, enjoyed like honours, and were the colleagues of Velazquez from the first. The three Italians, though strongly influenced, of course, by their national tradition, had shown considerable flexibility in conforming to Spanish taste, and catching the Spanish spirit. Nardi was an eclectic, trained at Bologna in the traditions of the Carracci. Caxesi, a Florentine on the paternal side, had a Spanish mother, and was born in Madrid. His art, therefore, had more of the grave, not to say gloomy, Castilian character than that of his fellow-artists. Vincenzo Carducho, the most important of the three and a prolific and versatile painter, was highly esteemed as a teacher. He also wrote a treatise on painting which ranks with Pacheco's *Arte de la Pintura* as a valuable record of contemporary Spanish art. The book was not published till 1633, but it no doubt embodies the polemics of many previous years, as it directs much impassioned argument against the detested naturalistic tendency, of which so redoubtable an exponent had been admitted into the very stronghold of art. Velazquez made no attempt to compete with the three Italianisers in their special departments, the painting of decorative works and altar-

pieces, and could in no way be supposed to encroach on their rights in the exercise of a genius with which they had so little sympathy. Carducho, indeed, pronounced portraiture the lowest branch of art, and declared that no painter of the first rank had ever practised it! Moreover, he saw in the newcomer's manner an attack on his own academic system. And so, although he never actually names Velazquez, he defends his own principles with unflinching vigour. The Sevillian seems to have borne himself with modesty and good-humour in the fray. When told by the king that his rivals reproached him with being unable to paint anything but heads, he retorted: "These gentlemen pay me a great compliment. At least I know no one who can paint a good head." The controversy is interesting, as showing that the young master's position was not entirely unassailed, and as having stimulated him to his first attempt at history, and his sole essay in allegory.

Philip, confident of his favourite's ability to meet his opponents on their own ground, proposed a competition between the four painters. Each was to paint his version of a given subject on a canvas of a given size, the results to be submitted to two judges, the Roman artist Crescenzi, and the Spanish friar Maino de Toledo. It was proposed to celebrate some great event in Spanish history, but the chosen theme seems a curious one, looked at in the light of later events. The expulsion of those Moriscos, or Moors, who had been allowed to remain in the country after the conquest of Granada, on condition that they embraced Christianity, was one of the most ruinous measures ever adopted by a Government. These inoffensive people, to whose industry and skill the country owed the greater part of its commercial prosperity, were driven across the Mediterranean in 1609. This choice of a subject was certainly more favourable to the Italians than to Velazquez, for its treatment demanded just the qualities of imagination and dignity in which they believed him to be deficient. Nevertheless, the judges pronounced decisively in his favour. All trace of the picture has long disappeared. It is supposed to have perished in the fire of 1734. Palomino, writing ten years earlier, describes it fully. It represented Philip III. in a white robe and armour, pointing seaward with his sceptre, and directing the embarkation of a weeping crowd of Moors, while an allegorical figure of Hispania, enthroned on

his right, looked on approvingly. Such an essay was, however, a rare incident in the main business of the painter's life at court, which was the production of royal or official portraits. Those to which he gave his almost exclusive attention during his first years of office initiated that wonderful series by which he has made the supercilious features of the fair-haired Philip as familiar to us as Vandyck has made those of our own Charles I.

Few characters in history have offered such a curious compound of contradictory qualities as Philip IV. If we may accept contemporary testimony he had many of the gifts that make a strong and wise ruler, but never were such qualities less effectively exercised. To a handsome person, a distinguished bearing, courtly manners, and proficiency in all the accomplishments of a cavalier, he added the more sterling virtues of a kind heart, a tolerant disposition, and a self-control so remarkable that he is said never to have shown anger, and only to have laughed three times in his life! His energetic action in dismissing his father's favourites, and instituting such reforms that a contemporary writer declared Philip III.'s death to have created a "new world," seemed to foreshadow a vigorous personal rule. Yet in the sequel, no king was ever more completely under the sway of his Ministers, or more timidly averse to any display of initiative. This becomes the more surprising when we find that he did not shrink from the tedium of affairs, but regularly devoted some six hours a day to the despatch of business; and that he had the most exalted notion of his own dignity, and of his mission as a Spanish king. His innumerable love affairs no doubt diverted his attention to some extent from more weighty matters; but these, in spite of the thirty-two natural children with which he is credited, were of an ephemeral kind, and no woman established a lasting ascendency over him. The vivifying gifts he lacked were a resolute will and a capacity for prompt and decisive action. Thus he resigned himself willingly to the *rôle* of a *roi fainéant* under such a Mayor of the Palace as Olivares, till the State he lacked the resolution to govern was well-nigh overwhelmed by disasters, and the prestige of one of the greatest empires that the world had ever known disappeared. In the character of a patron of art and letters Philip shows to greater advantage. He was the friend of Calderon, Rioja and Quevedo, he was the host of Rubens, and the

appreciative critic of Velazquez, while many foreign musicians, architects, and engineers had cause to bless his generosity.

In the first presentments of Philip there is a certain stiffness, an apparent adherence to a traditional treatment, not amiss in portraits of royal persons. The pose is severe and dignified, the expression haughty and impassable. No accessories detract from the majestic isolation of the figure. The costume is carefully and minutely observed. Philip appears dressed with the simplicity he himself introduced, an innovation which was one of the few reforms he carried out thoroughly and with resolution. Immediately after his accession the elaborate fashions in vogue under his predecessors were swept away by sumptuary laws. In particular the starched ruffs of Antonio More's sitters were forbidden by edict. In these early portraits the king wears the *golilla*, or plain turned-over collar of white linen. Pictorially, the one remarkable innovation to be noted is the substitution of a light gray background for the more usual dark one.

A bust in the Museo del Prado (No. 1071) is supposed to be the earliest extant portrait of Philip by Velazquez. It is perhaps a study for the first equestrian portrait. A full-length in the same gallery, in which the king, dressed in black, stands by a table, holding in his right hand a folded paper, is probably the next in order (No. 1070). A more elaborate work, painted perhaps a little later than this, is the portrait at Dorchester House, representing the king equipped as if about to take the field, grasping the commander's baton in his right hand. A portrait (No. 1073 in the Prado) of Philip's brother, Don Carlos, who died at the age of twenty-five, not without suspicion of having been poisoned by Olivares, may be grouped with the foregoing. The prince, who is described as by far the ablest of the three brothers, was at open enmity with the Minister. Fearing his influence over the king, Olivares jealously excluded him from any share in the administration, and even prevented his marriage, as likely to give him greater importance.

Olivares himself, that fountain, or rather conduit, of honour, to whom Velazquez owed his position, was painted more than once in the first decade of the master's activity at Madrid. Throughout their relations, Olivares proved himself a warm and generous friend to the painter, while Velazquez, on his side, was one of the few who remained

faithful to the Minister after his fall, even so far disregarding the severe etiquette of the Spanish Court as to visit his disgraced patron in his exile.

The career of this remarkable man is a strange chapter in the history of the times. Born at Rome in 1587, the second son of a distinguished father, who successively filled the posts of Ambassador to the Pope, Viceroy of Naples and Sicily, and Governor of the Alcazar of Seville, Don Gaspar Guzman, Count of Olivares, was originally intended for the Church, and studied at the University of Salamanca. A more brilliant prospect opened before him, however, on the death of his elder brother, after which event he married, and lived for some years in great splendour at Seville. Lerma invited him to Madrid during the lifetime of Philip III., and procured him the office of Chamberlain in the household of the Infante.

In this position he gained a complete ascendency over the future king, his junior by twenty years. He appears at first chiefly as the purveyor of his master's pleasures, and organiser of all matters connected with those sports and pastimes of which Philip was so passionately fond. In short, he seems to have played the part of a less roystering Falstaff to a more decorous Prince Hal. In this case, however, it was the boon companion who first "turned away from his former self," and, leaving the diversion of his master to others, suddenly revealed the gifts of a subtle and ambitious politician. His conversion from a mere master of the revels to an all-powerful Minister caused at first a kind of incredulous consternation which no doubt favoured his designs. His only rival in the administration was his uncle Zuñiga, on whose death the nephew became practically the autocrat of the State and ruler of its ruler. He obtained command of the royal signet, and dispensed favours and honours like a sovereign. His industry was as boundless as his appetite for power. He was at work day and night, and even gave audiences to envoys while still in bed. All State papers passed through his hands, and the king relied absolutely on his judgment. Nor was his ambition of the more sordid kind. Personally incorruptible, it soon became known that the bribes which had been freely accepted by the complaisant Lerma were powerless in the case of Olivares. He dreamt of universal empire for his country, empire of which the sovereign might enjoy the prestige,

*Philip IV. National Gallery.*

while he himself wielded the power. Unhappily for Spain, he had the ambition of a Richelieu without the ability, and the blunders of his administration brought more loss upon his country than all the victories of her generals had brought gain. Early in his career the king created him Duke of Lucar—hence the title El Conde-Duque by which he is familiarly known. No Minister was ever more detested. Much of this ill-will, no doubt, sprang from mere envy of his power, but even the well-disposed were alienated by his arrogance of manner.

The extant portraits of Olivares by Velazquez are comparatively few in number, and it has been suggested, with much probability, that some may have been destroyed by their owners after his downfall. Several engravings indeed exist of portraits which have disappeared. Among them is the well-known plate by Paul Pontius, with an emblematic setting designed by Rubens. The list of existing portraits begins with the full-length at Dorchester House, in which the Conde-Duque stands, dressed in black, against a dark background, in his right hand the wand of office as Master of the Horse. Of this picture Mr. Edward Huth possesses a replica at Wykehurst, Sussex. It represents the Minister at about forty years of age.

It has long been a vexed question among connoisseurs how far the adoption of a broader manner by Velazquez was determined by an event in any case of great interest in his career, the arrival of Rubens on a diplomatic mission to Madrid in the summer of 1628. The great Fleming was the bearer of letters and despatches from the Infanta Isabella, Regent of the Netherlands. These letters had to do with the peace proposals informally thrown out from the English Court through the medium of Balthazar Gerbier, Charles I.'s painter. After the successful accomplishment of his mission, which had for ulterior result his famous visit to England in the following year, Rubens laid aside the ambassador and remained several months in the Spanish capital as a painter. The monopoly of Velazquez in the reproduction of the royal features was gracefully waived on this occasion, Rubens was assigned a studio in the palace, where the king visited him almost daily. He painted an equestrian portrait of Philip to His Majesty's "great satisfaction and approval," and a series of heads of the whole royal family "for the illustrious Infanta, my mistress."

Rubens, on an earlier visit to Madrid, had found little to admire in Spanish art. He now seems, however, to have formed a very high opinion of Velazquez. "He (Rubens) associated little with painters," says Pacheco; "only with my son-in-law (with whom he had previously exchanged letters) he formed a friendship, and expressed himself very favourably on his works because of his modesty. They visited the Escorial together." It was on this occasion that Rubens made the famous sketch of the Escorial from which several landscapes were afterwards painted in his studio.

At the time of this visit, Rubens was fifty-one, and Velazquez twenty-nine. It is natural to suppose that the close intimacy in which these two great men lived for months was not without some effect on the development of the younger. But the Spaniard's genius was so original, his æsthetic aims so definite from the first, that his art shows no trace of direct reflection from that of the gorgeous Fleming. The increase in vigour which marks his work about this period may be accounted for on other grounds than that of Sir Peter Paul's influence. Velazquez had, in fact, by this time left behind the phase of dry and painful workmanship by which most great artists have attained to freedom of hand, and felt the confidence that comes from a knowledge of power. The intercourse with Rubens bore fruit more by precept than by example, for it was by the Antwerp master's advice that he begged the king's consent to the journey he had long wished to make into Italy.

The famous *Bebedores* or *Borrachos* (the Topers) has been relied on as a document proving his indebtedness to Rubens, but its execution hardly warrants the assumption, though the subject—one rarely treated by Spanish artists—is certainly more Flemish than Spanish. Velazquez seems to have been kept at work almost exclusively on portraits during his first ten years at court, and the *Borrachos* is the first recorded work in which we find him harking back to the popular subjects of his Sevillian period. The conception is highly original, blending the most finely observed realities with fable so rendered as to seem almost realistic. In the foreground of a hilly landscape the grotesque Bacchus, a finely-modelled figure, nude but for the drapery over his legs, thrones it on a cask amidst a band of weather-beaten revellers, one of whom, a burly

*The Count-Duke Olivares. After Velazquez, with a border by Rubens. From the Engraving by Paul Pontius.*

soldier, he crowns with vine leaves. It is strange that the master should have made no subsequent variations on a theme once treated with such entire success. According to an entry in the palace archives, the picture was painted "for the service of His Majesty." On July 22, 1629, Velazquez received a hundred ducats in payment for a "Bacchus," together with three hundred ducats of arrears due to him. He had already, in the preceding year, been granted an increase of salary, consisting of "the daily ration of a chamber barber" (physician, surgeon, and chemist were already provided), and other perquisites to the value of three reals a day, with the further privilege of a suit of clothes each year to the value of ninety ducats. The four hundred ducats were therefore, no doubt, as has been suggested, a provision for the expenses of the Italian journey. The *Bebedores* is in the Madrid Gallery. Two replicas exist, which have puzzled critics considerably. One, accepted by the majority as a study for the Madrid picture, is in Lord Heytesbury's collection, the other in the Naples Museum. Lord Heytesbury's picture is too carefully finished for a sketch, and differs in some essentials from the original. It is signed (an unusual feature with Velazquez), and bears a date generally read as 1624, but which Dr. Bode and Justi agree in taking to be rather 1634.

## CHAPTER III

### FIRST VISIT TO ITALY

### 1629

Velazquez had long been anxious to visit Italy, the Mecca of the seventeenth-century artist. Such a desire is likely to have been stimulated on all occasions by Pacheco, and was warmly encouraged by Rubens, whose personal intercession may very probably have been brought to bear on the king. A few weeks after the Antwerp master's departure from Madrid, Velazquez not only received the royal consent to his departure, but was urged by the king to start at once. He received the four hundred silver dollars above referred to for his expenses, which Olivares supplemented by a further sum of two hundred gold ducats, a medallion of the king, and many letters of introduction. These letters were especially necessary at the time. Italy was in a state of ferment over the Mantuan succession, a question involving issues far wider than those nominally at stake. The Duc de Nevers, who, having claimed the heritage of the Gonzaghi on the death of Vincenzo without direct heirs, was in possession with the support of France, was unrecognised by Spain. The dispute had resolved itself into a duel between Olivares and his detested rival, Richelieu. "Luigi III.," says Manzoni, "ossia il cardinale di Richelieu, sosteneva quel principe, suo ben affetto e naturalizzato francese: Filippo IV., ossia il conte d' Olivares, comunemente chiamato il conte duca, non lo voleva li, per le stesse ragione, e gli aveva mosso guerra."[1]

[1] "Louis XIII., or rather Cardinal Richelieu, upheld the prince (the Duc de Nevers), his good friend, and a naturalised Frenchman; Philip IV., or rather the Count of Olivares, commonly called the Count-Duke, would have none of him, for those very reasons, and declared war against him."

The preparations of Velazquez for departure coincided with the Count-Duke's determination to despatch the great captain Ambrogio Spinola to take the command in Italy. Spinola had but just returned from his victorious campaign in the Netherlands, his prestige enhanced by his latest exploit, the capture of Breda. It was resolved that Velazquez should travel under the protection of the general, to whom he afterwards paid so magnificent a tribute in the famous *Las Lanzas*. But a visitor arriving in such company was by no means sure of a favourable reception at all the Italian courts. In addition to the recommendations he carried with him from the Minister, it was thought necessary to obtain from the various Italian envoys in Madrid special letters, assuring their respective Governments of the purely artistic and non-political object of his journey. Several of these envoys supplemented their formal despatches by private communications, designed to set at rest suspicions that seem to have been entertained as to the possibility of the master's *métier* being a cloak for the functions of a spy. Safeguarded thus by credentials to Rome, Venice, Bologna, Ferrara, and many of the minor states, Velazquez left Madrid with Spinola, attended by his slave and assistant, the Morisco Juan de Pareja, and embarked at Barcelona on August 10. He reached Genoa on the 20th. He probably travelled to Milan with Spinola, and at any rate arrived in Venice by the end of the month.

In Venice, the only one of the North Italian states which had successfully resisted Spanish domination, hostility to Spain and her policy was at its height. The Republic was preparing for war, arming and recruiting with feverish energy. Mocenigo, the Venetian envoy in Madrid, had given Velazquez a safe-conduct and letters to various persons of importance in the city. He had also answered to the Senate for his peaceable intentions. The painter was lodged in the Spanish Embassy, but, in addition to other safeguards, it was deemed prudent to protect him with an escort out of doors. Little is known of his sojourn in the city of the lagoons, but it is easy to imagine how his days were spent. Palomino says that he "drew incessantly," and spent much time in the Scuola di San Rocco, making studies from the great works of Tintoretto, especially from the *Crucifixion*. He made a copy of the *Last Supper* for the king. The art of Tintoretto seems to have made

a deep impression on him, and one which was not without its influence on his own practice. But Boschini tells us that his highest enthusiasm was reserved for Titian, and puts into his mouth the following dictum :—

> I saw in Venice
> The true test of the good and the beautiful ;
> First in my judgment ever stands that school, . .
> And Titian first of all Italian men.[1]

He would gladly have remained longer in Venice, says Palomino, had not the war prevented him.

His next goal was Rome, whither he journeyed by way of Ferrara, where he presented his letters of recommendation to Cardinal Saccheti, sometime Papal Nunzio in Spain. The Cardinal received him graciously, and wished him to take up his quarters in his own palace. The master excused himself, on the ground that his dinner-hour would not be that of his host ! Saccheti accordingly ordered a lodging to be found for him, and directed a member of his household to show him the sights of the city. Food was also provided from the Cardinal's own table. Between Venice and Rome, Bologna was his only halting-place, and so eager was he to reach the Eternal City that he made but a brief stay in the shadow of the Garisenda and Asinelli, so brief indeed that he did not deliver his letters of introduction. He renounced his proposed visit to Florence ; it does not appear for what reason. He arrived in Rome to find preparations for war going on as actively there as in Venice, and the city swarming with armed bravoes, the retainers of the great prelates and nobles. All were ready for a sudden call to battle. Urban VIII. and his nephew, Cardinal Barberini, had patriotic aspirations for Italian freedom and unity. They dreamed of a confederation of states, in which Rome should join hands with Venice, Florence, and Genoa. The Pope had invited Louis XIII. to enter Italy and draw his sword on behalf of the "woman among nations." Monterey, the Spanish ambassador, rarely appeared at the Papal Court, where all things Spanish were the objects of constant ridicule and opprobrium. Velazquez, nevertheless, was received with great courtesy by Cardinal Barberini, a fervent lover of the arts. The Cardinal obtained him a lodging in the Vatican, and

[1] Ruskin, *Two Paths*.

*The Forge of Vulcan.*

gave him the keys of certain rooms, so that he might go in and out at his will. The painter soon left this lodging, however, finding it inconvenient, and disliking the solitude in which he found himself. He

*Juan de Pareja. Collection of the Earl of Carlisle.*
*From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery.*

sought and received permission to be let in freely by the watch when he wanted to draw from "Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* or things from Raphael." He was so delighted with the situation of the Villa Medici

that he next wished to take up summer quarters there. Count Monterey accordingly obtained the necessary lease from the Tuscan Grand Duke, and Velazquez worked industriously for two months in this earthly paradise. At that time the Villa was still the home of Cardinal Ferdinand de' Medici's famous collection of antiques. This included the *Venus de' Medici*, the *Wrestlers*, and the *Niobe*, afterwards removed to Florence. The opportunity of studying these statues was, no doubt, one of the Villa's chief attractions to the Spanish painter. Two companion sketches in the Prado, Nos. 1106 and 1107 (garden scenes with statues), are interesting memorials of his sojourn. After a time he was driven from his retreat by an attack of ague, which forced him to move to the healthier neighbourhood of the Spanish Embassy. Monterey was assiduous in his attentions, sending his doctor to attend him, and keeping him well supplied with delicacies during his convalescence.

Poussin was at work in Rome, and in close proximity to Velazquez during his stay on the Pincian. The two painters no doubt met, but we hear nothing of their intercourse. Velazquez was absorbed in the great masters of a past generation, and probably felt little drawn either towards the new school of classic landscapes, or to the decadents of the Roman School. A doubtful tradition, put forward by Cean Bermundez, asserts that while in Rome he ordered a picture from each of the twelve most famous painters in Italy on behalf of Philip, and took them back to Spain with him. Among the twelve were Guido, Guercino, Domenichino, and Sandrart, who, indeed, mentions the commission in his *Teutsche Akademie*, but says nothing of any part played by Velazquez in the transaction. It seems probable therefore that Monterey, who afterwards gave similar commissions to the best artists in Naples, was the prime mover in the affair. None of the works ordered seem ever to have found their way to Madrid.

While he was in Rome, Velazquez did not exclusively confine his attention to studies from the great works of the past. He painted two memorable pictures for the king, his master—the *Forge of Vulcan*, now in the Museo del Prado, and *Joseph's Coat*, in the Escorial. The first marks a change in the master's development, and betrays perhaps more decisively than any other of his works the influence Italy had upon him. And in saying this I am not forgetting the *Coronation of the*

*Virgin*, and its perhaps more obvious surrender to Italian ideals. Velazquez, like other great painters, does not seem to have always followed the best examples set by his predecessors. In the *Forge of Vulcan*, as in *Mars*, and the *Flagellation* of the National Gallery and some other works of his middle period, Bolognese influence—or, to be more particular, the influence of Guido—is unmistakable. The silvery tones, the clear, limpid, passionless design, even in parts the types selected, recall the Bolognese master, and show that the Spaniard was not unaffected by the vogue his art enjoyed in the Rome of Urban VIII. In the *Forge* traces, too, seem to be visible of the influence of Poussin, although on that point we may feel more doubt than in the case of Guido. The difference between the *Forge* and the *Borrachos*, which, as Justi remarks, "even a dull eye can see," is not so much one of execution as of conception. Both pictures are "tight" in their painting, the surfaces being fused and the outlines *découpés* and sculpturesque. The difference is one entirely due to the example of work less pregnant, less closely packed, less terribly in earnest than his own. Not for some time yet was Velazquez to win real freedom or breadth of hand. The touch of quasi-mythological feeling which is almost lost under the realism of the *Borrachos*, hardens into something more salient in the *Forge*, but even there classic fable is treated in a spirit akin to that which inspired the organisers of a mystery play.

Vulcan stands at the forge, surrounded by four brawny assistants, and listens with an angry but improbable surprise to the tale of his partner's treachery. Apollo, a sturdy, laurel-crowned youth, declaims with uplifted finger at the entrance to the forge. The pictorial motive is the contrast of the various nude bodies under different conditions of light. The pendant picture, *Joseph's Coat*, though so different in subject, deals with much the same artistic problem. It, too, is a composition of five figures, two of them finely-modelled nudes, illumined by the light that streams from two large windows into a lofty hall with a chequered marble floor. The aged Jacob, seated in the shade of a curtain, listens horror-stricken to the tale of his son's supposed end.

Two portraits painted during this Italian visit remain to be noticed. The more interesting of the pair cannot now be identified with any certainty. This was the picture described by Pacheco as the "portrait of

my son-in-law, executed in Rome and painted in the manner of the great Titian, and (if it be permitted to say so) not inferior to that artist's heads." Mündler suggests, with some probability, that it may be identical with the beautiful head of a young man in the Gallery of the Capitol, to which he was the first to draw attention as a work of Velazquez.

The second portrait took Velazquez from Rome to Naples. Early in the winter of 1630 he received instructions from Philip to bring back a portrait of the Infanta Maria, the king's favourite sister. After the failure of the proposed match with Charles of England, she had become the wife of Ferdinand, King of Hungary. Her marriage had taken place early in the preceding year, but the preparations for her journey to her new home had occupied many months, and when at last she set out she was compelled to take the route by Naples, as the plague was raging in North Italy. She remained four months in Naples, lodged in the Palazzo Reale. Two portraits of her ascribed to Velazquez are extant. One is a bust in the Prado Gallery (No. 1072), the other a full-length in the Berlin Gallery. The claim of the latter to be by the hand of Velazquez himself is doubtful. At Naples, Velazquez made the acquaintance of Ribera, the master whose influence is so apparent in his early works. Ribera held the post of court painter to the Spanish Viceroy, and to him was entrusted the supervision of all artistic matters in the Palazzo Reale. It was perhaps to the friendship formed during this visit that Ribera owed much of the appreciation he afterwards enjoyed in Madrid. A large number of his pictures found their way to the Alcazar during Velazquez's later administration of the Royal Galleries, and are still preserved in the Prado.

From Naples the master returned to Madrid, having been absent eighteen months. He was warmly received both by Olivares and the king. The latter expressed a lively pleasure at his return, while Velazquez, on his part, was gratified to find that no other artist had been allowed to paint His Majesty during his absence.

# CHAPTER IV

## NINETEEN YEARS AT COURT

### 1631–1649

From 1631 to 1649, the term commonly described as the middle period of Velazquez, he worked uninterruptedly at the court of Philip, following the sovereign in his sojourns at the hunting-seats of El Pardo, Buen Retiro, and Aranjuez, and accompanying him on his military expeditions to the seat of war in Aragon. The more intimate records of these fruitful years are very scanty, and the painter's history must be read chiefly in his works. Although he rarely signed or dated a picture, it is possible to fix the dates of many important achievements by the help of contemporary records or internal evidences. Classified roughly, the pictures fall into three principal groups:—(1) Hunting-scenes, with a few landscapes and *fêtes galantes* (?); (2) portraits of royalties, notably of the king and the youthful Don Balthazar Carlos, together with certain portraits of distinguished visitors to the court and State dignitaries; (3) historical and religious subjects, as represented by the *Surrender of Breda*, the *Crucifixion*, and the *Flagellation*.

Sport was Philip's ruling passion. It is strange to read of the immense sums which were squandered on great hunts at a time when the royal exchequer was at so low an ebb that no official could get his salary without endless importunity. The pay of the king's own body-guard was three years in arrear. Velazquez himself, in a petition which makes special mention of a great hunting-scene painted for the Torre de la Parada, begs earnestly for payment for his work, excusing his boldness on the grounds of his *mucha necesidad*. This petition is dated

October 16, 1636. In Spain, hunting was the recognised royal pastime. The early kings of Castile and Leon made frequent expeditions to the large tract of wooded country lying about six miles north of Madrid, in which stood the village of El Pardo, so often mentioned in the annals of royal sport. At El Pardo (not to be confounded with the Prado, the public pleasance of the Madrileños under the Philips, as it still is) stood an ancient hunting-seat, restored and enlarged by Charles V. About half a mile from this Charles also built a tower, as an occasional halting-place on his expeditions to Balsain. To this tower Philip IV. made large additions, turning it into a hunting-box, where he lodged with his suite and his guests on all great sporting occasions. For such a retreat, hunting-scenes were the obvious decoration. They were by no means novelties in Spain, where this branch of art had long been cultivated. Flemish artists had been in the habit of painting pictures of the kind for Spanish princes, and Pieter Snayers, in particular, had executed several for Philip IV.'s brother, the Cardinal-Prince Fernando. When, however, it was resolved to commemorate some special occasion, and local accuracy was a *sine qua non*, native artists had of course to be employed.

As may be supposed, the king was anxious that certain red-letter days in the annals of his favourite pastime should be immortalised by his favourite painter. On these large compositions Velazquez seems to have bestowed unusual pains, making experimental sketches for the groups of spectators. These, no doubt, were recognisable portraits when painted. It is not impossible that the famous group of thirteen gentlemen in the Louvre is one of these sketches, although, personally, I have very strong doubts as to its being the work of Velazquez at all. This, however, is part of a question that must be left for future discussion. At present all that need be said is that the most important picture in this connection is the *Boar Hunt* of the National Gallery. The hunt, or, to be more accurate, the boar-baiting, occurs in a glade of the Pardo. The flat bottom of the little valley is artificially enclosed in the manner of an amphitheatre. On these occasions a circular space was, in fact, walled in by a double partition of canvas fixed to stakes and bars. The quarry was decoyed by food through an opening which was securely barred when enough animals had been entrapped to afford good sport.

*The Boar Hunt. National Gallery.*

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Within the arena the cavaliers who were to take part in the business were grouped. They were armed with a sort of trident, called a *horquilla*, with which they tormented the boar much as the modern picador does the bull. In the National Gallery picture the spectators stand for the most part on a knoll outside the canvas wall, but a curious feature of contemporary manners is shown in the presence within the enclosure of coaches in which sit the queen, Isabella de Bourbon, and other ladies. Among these, if the occasion is, as generally supposed, the great hunt of 1638, was the famous Marie de Rohan, Duchesse de Chevreuse, the friend and confidante of Philip's sister, Anne of Austria. The duchess had escaped from France, or rather from Richelieu, in boy's clothes, and had found a cordial welcome at the Spanish Court. These lady spectators were provided with *horquillas* to turn the boar if the beast made a rush at the carriages, as he sometimes did. To the right of the picture (left of the spectator) the king, closely attended by Olivares, is shown in the act of thrusting his gilded trident into the boar's flank. The cavalier on horseback behind is said to represent the Cardinal-Prince, but this identification does not agree with the supposed date, as Fernando was in Flanders in 1638. Lord Ashburton's large *Stag Hunt* is an elaborate composition of the same class. Here the king and his brothers enter the arena attended by Olivares, while Queen Isabella, with her ladies, looks on from a platform above. The great hunts at El Pardo were more largely attended and less jealously confined to the royal circle than those of Aranjuez and Buen Retiro, to which even distinguished foreign visitors were rarely invited.

Buen Retiro was an inspiration of Olivares. The story of its building reminds one of Wolsey, or of some ambitious Grand-Vizier of the Arabian Nights. The Count-Duke owned a park near the Prado, where he amused himself by breeding pheasants and rare poultry. In his constant anxiety to divert the king's mind from affairs of State, he conceived the idea of providing him with the means of enjoying his favourite sport at the gates of the capital itself. He extended his originally small estate by purchase and other devices till it covered an area of nearly a square mile. Then he built a house, laid out grounds and stocked preserves with a secrecy and despatch almost magical, and finally presented it to the king. The new villa adjoined the monastery

of San Geronimo, in connection with which a royal *pied-à-terre* already existed in the shape of a "retreat," where members of the reigning family were accustomed to retire for Holy Week, and for periods of court mourning. The architect, Crescenzi, was supposed to direct the work, but was overruled at every point by Olivares, whose interference was fatally apparent in the faulty and flimsy construction. A chapel and a theatre were attached to the main building, and the whole was completed in the short space of two years. On December 1, 1633, the king took formal possession of his new toy, celebrating the occasion by a grand tournament in which he tilted with Olivares. The joust took place in the plaza before the theatre. This theatre was the crowning attraction of Buen Retiro. Olivares secured the services of the most famous Italian scene-painters and stage mechanicians of the day, and inaugurated a series of gorgeous masques and spectacles. Some of these took place in the illuminated gardens. One memorable performance was that of Calderon's *Circe* in 1635, on an island in the *Estanque Grande*, the largest of the artificial lakes.

The internal decoration of the new building next engaged the Minister's attention. This gave an opportunity for the employment of many native artists. Pedro Orrente (d. 1644), Juan de la Corte (1597-1660), and Francisco Collantes (1599-1656) painted a number of landscapes, Biblical and mythological pieces, many of which are now in Spanish museums. Seven artists of Madrid were also employed in celebrating the national victories in the recent wars, Olivares choosing the subjects, while Velazquez seems to have superintended the undertaking generally, in some cases directly influencing the treatment. A *Surrender of Breda*, by José Leonardo, was one of the series. Velazquez seems to have been oppressed by José's inadequate rendering of a great event for the treatment of which his own intimacy with its hero, Spinola, had given him peculiar advantages. In any case, he gave his own version, and with what looks like brutality, annihilated Leonardo's picture by hanging his own magnificent creation beside it in the Sala de los Reinos. The series, as we learn from a despatch written by Serrano, the Florentine envoy at Madrid, was completed, with one unimportant exception, in the spring of 1635. It has been assumed that *Las Lanzas*, as the Breda picture is commonly called,

was painted about 1647. But it seems not unlikely that it belongs to a somewhat earlier date. Originality of conception, nobility of treatment, and a strongly dramatic interest combine with splendid pictorial quality to make this not only one of the master's greatest achievements, but perhaps the finest purely historical picture in the world.

Extraordinary enthusiasm had been roused in Spain by the capture of Breda in 1625. After many vicissitudes during the great war in the Netherlands, when the city had been alternately held by the two contending parties, Breda had fallen into the hands of the Orange family. They had a castle there, strongly fortified, as indeed was the town itself. Its proximity to Antwerp and the great natural advantages of its position caused it to be accepted by both parties as the key to the Netherlands. After a close investiture of a year, the fortress surrendered to the Spanish troops under Spinola, their Genoese commander, an event justly esteemed the crowning exploit of his brilliant campaign in the Low Countries. Spinola covered himself with glory no less by his military success than by the gallantry with which he treated the vanquished. The most honourable terms were accorded to the besieged. Permission was given to Justin of Nassau, the governor, to march out under arms, with flags flying, and lighted matches. A general amnesty was proclaimed so far as non-combatants were concerned, and various other concessions were made ; the members of the Orange family, for instance, were allowed to remove all their portable property.

The defeated general evacuated the place and handed over the keys to Spinola on June 2. Velazquez has chosen the moment of this significant ceremony. Spinola, attended by a brilliant staff, awaited the garrison at Tetteringhen. Justin, accompanied by his family and other prominent citizens, advanced at the head of the infantry, from which the cavalry bringing up the rear were hardly to be distinguished, owing to the loss of nearly all their horses. The foreground of the canvas is filled by the two groups of main actors in the drama. Beyond them stretches the wide lowland champaign, intersected by the river Merk, and winding across the plain in long perspective we see the column of the capitulating force. To the right is grouped a body of

Spanish spearmen, their long ash-wood shafts cutting the horizon in tall vertical lines. The effect these shafts produce is a stroke of genius, and quite justifies the popular name of the picture. The interest culminates, of course, in the figures of the two protagonists. Both generals dismounted before they met, and Spinola's charger, held by a squire on the left, makes an important passage of dark colour in the foreground. Justin, bent but not broken, hands the key to his chivalrous foe with an expression of resigned, yet dignified sorrow, a sense of having played his part worthily enabling him to meet adversity with courage. It is in his conception of Spinola that Velazquez shows his greatness. The noble serenity of his own temper is reflected in Spinola's countenance "as in water face answereth to face." The Italian's tall figure is bent slightly forward as he lays his hand kindly on the Flemish commander's shoulder. Attitude and expression proclaim that perfection of good breeding which springs from the union of courtliness with warmth of heart. Spinola, we are told, praised the valour of his opponent, telling him that the courage of the vanquished is the only glory of the victor.

In the technical treatment, the master evidently kept the destination of his picture well in view. The effect is broadly decorative; the tones are warmer and the tints more various and positive than is usual with Velazquez. Mr. Stevenson says, in his elaborate study of the "Art of Velazquez," that "it was rather the purpose than the subject of the *Surrender of Breda* which modified the art of Velazquez, and made it akin to the work of a Venetian. The canvas was to serve as a decorative panel, a thing to be looked at as one looks at a piece of tapestry; hence, doubtless, its decorative features, its variety of colours, its blue foundation, its brown foreground, its blocklike pattern." No doubt this is true to a certain extent, although, perhaps, the reasoning should be carried farther back, and we should say simply that the subject was chosen for its fitness for decorative treatment. As to the blue foundation and brown foreground, those occur in many other pictures of this period, notably in the Don Balthazar Carlos, reproduced in one of our plates, and no one can look out from the palace at Madrid towards the Guadarama and fail to see how they are suggested. The younger man in a broad-brimmed hat to the extreme left of the

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*The Infante Balthazar Carlos.*

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canvas has always been called the painter himself. Justi pronounces against this tradition, but, perhaps, on insufficient grounds. The head certainly differs from that of the master's portrait of himself in *Las Meniñas*, otherwise called *La Famiglia*, chiefly, however, in things which years may very well have modified.

*Las Lanzas*, the great picture of the master's middle period, to which it bears the same relation as *La Famiglia* does to his last manner, may be taken as the nucleus round which to group other works of the same epoch. Speaking broadly, Velazquez may be said to have first reached his bloom at this time. His visit to Italy had suggested a goal for his ambition to aim at, had shown him more fully what paint could do than his experience at home. With Titian, of course, he had been familiar, but in the dark Spanish interiors of the seventeenth century, the impression made by the great Venetian would be weak compared with that received from his work in Venice, with the *cortége* of Bellinis, and Giorgiones, and Tintorettos which enhanced its power. The individuality of the Spaniard is no less marked in this intermediate time than it was later, when his mere self-reliance became more pronounced, but it accepts notions and conventions from the neighbouring peninsula which it afterwards simply did without. The earliest portraits in which the results of his Italian journey can be clearly traced are, I think, the three companion full-lengths painted for the Torre de la Parada, namely, the king, his short-lived heir, Don Balthazar Carlos, and Prince Fernando, all in hunting costume. That of the little Infante bears the inscription *anno aetatis suae VI.* We are thus enabled to fix 1635 as the date of the picture. The king's portrait was probably painted in the same year. That of Don Fernando, or at any rate the study for it, must have been painted a year or two earlier, for in 1632 the Cardinal-Prince left Spain for the Netherlands, where he took up his residence as the appointed successor of the Regent Isabella. In all three portraits the landscape is practically the same, a sierra in the distance, an oak-tree near the figure in the foreground. The three sportsmen are attended by their dogs, and carry their guns. In Don Fernando's costume the impasto is loaded as if to conceal a dress of earlier date, and the companion pieces also show traces of retouching. All three may have been worked upon to make them harmonise when hung

together. After the sacking and partial destruction of the Torre de la Parada during the War of the Spanish Succession, these portraits were removed to Buen Retiro. They afterwards went to the new palace on the site of the Alcazar, whence they passed to the Museo del Prado.

To this period belong the four great equestrian portraits of *Philip IV.*, *Queen Isabella*, *Don Balthazar Carlos*, and *Olivares*, Nos. 1066, 1067, 1068, and 1069 in the Prado. That of Philip was probably painted in 1635. Olivares proposed to complete the adornment of Buen Retiro by the erection of a great equestrian statue of the king. This the Florentine, Pietro Tacca, was commissioned to execute. In 1635 Tacca, who had made some progress in the general design of his work, asked for a portrait of Philip from which to study the figure and costume. Velazquez was probably working at the time on the equestrian portrait, and there seems to be every reason to suppose that the canvas despatched to Florence was the small repetition of the Madrid picture, which now hangs in the Pitti Palace (No. 243). The compiler of the Uffizi catalogue claims this distinction for the huge semi-allegorical piece in the Sala del Baroccio, and is supported by critics of a former generation, in spite of the obviously Flemish origin of this work. It is clearly a copy with decorations by some pupil of Rubens, worked on perhaps by that master himself.

In the Madrid picture a gallant cavalier, in the prime of early manhood, bestrides a bay Andalusian charger. He wears gold-embroidered breeches and a burnished steel cuirass, inlaid with gold, crossed by a crimson scarf, the ends of which flutter behind him. His right hand grasps a baton. The background, a wide stretch of Castilian upland with the sierra in the distance, forms an appropriate setting for a king who was reputed to be the best horseman in Spain. There is a good copy of this picture at Hertford House.

The companion canvas of Isabella de Bourbon, Philip's first wife, though inferior as a work of art, is interesting as her one unquestionably authentic portrait by Velazquez. The head is all that remains of the original, the horse and landscape having been entirely repainted by the master himself, while the elaborate dress and trappings are by another hand. Many portraits of Isabella were sent as gifts to foreign courts

during her lifetime, but it would be hazardous to assert that any of these were actually by the hand of Velazquez. They were probably painted by pupils under his direction, perhaps from his sketches. Isabella greatly disliked sitting, as she told the Duchesse de Chevreuse when

*Philip IV. on Horseback. Museo del Prado, Madria. From a Photograph by J. Laurent.*

urged to have her portrait painted for her sister, Henrietta Maria of England. The portrait at Hampton Court, formerly in Charles I.'s collection, is no doubt one of these studio pictures. It was probably adapted from the sketch made by Velazquez for his equestrian portrait. The serious and intelligent, rather than beautiful face, is framed in dark hair puffed over the forehead and ears. Little likeness

can be traced either to the strongly-marked features of Isabella's great father, or to the delicate beauty of her sister. The fate of Isabella, though not so tragic as that of Henrietta Maria, was melancholy enough. She was greatly beloved in her adopted country, where her sweetness of disposition commanded no less admiration than the judgment she displayed when entrusted with the administration during Philip's absence at the seat of war. Fearing her influence, Olivares had done his best from the first years of her marriage to sow discord between the royal couple, and to divert the king's affections. The Countess Olivares, a sour, elderly duenna, was appointed her first lady-in-waiting, and acted the part of spy and gaoler. After the downfall of Olivares, the king made tardy atonement for his neglect by a renewal of his early affection, and a public recognition of her worth and talents. But the responsibilities so suddenly restored seem to have overtaxed a constitution undermined by grief and chagrin. The king was still absent when she was attacked by her last illness, but she begged he might not be summoned back, lest the success of the Catalonian expedition should be endangered. From Saragossa Philip sent her a parure of diamonds, with affectionate assurances of his concern at her illness. "Now I am sure of the king's affection," she exclaimed, "but this ornament I shall never wear. He will see me again only in death." She died on October 6, 1644.

Two children survived her, one of whom, the idolised Balthazar Carlos, followed her to an early grave, while the other, the Infanta Maria Theresa, went to France as the bride of her cousin, Louis XIV. The equestrian portrait of the young prince is one of the finest things painted by the master for Buen Retiro. The boy rides an Andalusian pony, and flourishes his baton with an engaging mimicry of his father. In decorative brilliancy of colour Velazquez never excelled this picture. A positively dazzling effect is produced by the richly-dressed little horseman, in his green velvet doublet, white sleeves, and red scarf against the iridescent landscape. Don Balthazar is said to have delighted his father by his skill and courage in the riding school; the king makes frequent allusions to his progress in letters to Don Fernando, who encouraged his little nephew by presents of armour, dogs, and a pony described as a "little devil," but warranted to go like "a little dog" if

treated to some half-dozen lashes before being mounted. The prince's horsemanship was probably acquired under the direction of Olivares, one

*The Riding School. Collection of the Duke of Westminster.*
*From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery.*

of the best horsemen in Spain, who appears in one of two sketches ascribed to Velazquez, showing the child preparing for a lesson with the lance.

Both are in English collections. The Duke of Westminster owns that with Olivares in the arena, and the king and queen looking on from the balcony of the building which is now the Royal Armoury; the other, a composition with more figures, is at Hertford House. Don Balthazar was born during the absence of Velazquez in Rome. The master painted him first at the age of two, as we learn from a reference to such a portrait in a document of 1634. The picture at Castle Howard (once ascribed to Correggio!) shows him at about the same age, or a little older. He stands somewhat insecurely, supporting himself by means of a baton, while a dwarf rather more in the foreground seems to encourage him to walk by holding out a silver rattle and an apple. This is, perhaps, the earliest of the fine series of portraits which chronicle the various stages of the prince's short career. Several were sent to foreign courts as preliminaries to a demand for the hand of this or that princess, the prince's marriage having been a subject of anxious consideration almost from his birth. A portrait in Buckingham Palace, representing him in armour, with golden spurs, lace collar, and crimson scarf, is supposed to be the picture spoken of by the Tuscan envoy in 1639. "A portrait of the Crown Prince has been sent to England, as if His Highness's marriage with that Princess were close at hand." Such a picture figures in the inventory of Charles I.'s collection, and in the catalogue of one of the sales under the Commonwealth as "The Prince of Spain." A more important example of this class is a full-length at Vienna, in a black velvet dress embroidered with silver, sent to the Austrian Court when a betrothal with the Emperor Ferdinand's daughter, Mariana, was under discussion. In 1645 the Infante went with his father to receive the homage of the provinces of Aragon and Navarre, an event commemorated by Juan Bautista del Mazo-Martiñez, commonly known as Mazo, in his fine *View of Saragossa* (No. 788 in the Prado); the figures in which, representing the royal party, have been ascribed to Velazquez himself. In June of the following year, the prince's betrothal to Mariana was officially announced, and shortly afterwards he accompanied his father to the seat of war in Aragon, where his beauty and spirit excited great enthusiasm. A chill taken at Saragossa cut short the young life on which such high hopes had been built on October 6, 1646. With characteristic self-control, Philip, to whom policy and

affection alike made this loss the most cruel of disasters, announced the boy's death to the Marquis of Legañes in the following letter :—

MARQUIS—We must all of us yield to God's will, and I more than others. It has pleased Him to take my son from me about an hour ago. Mine is such grief

*The Infante Balthazar Carlos, with a Page. Collection of the Earl of Carlisle. From a Photograph published by the Directors of the New Gallery.*

as you can conceive at such a loss, but also full of resignation in the hand of God, and courage and resolution to provide for the defence of my lands, for they also are my children. . . . And so I beseech you not to relax in the operations of this campaign until Lerida is relieved.

The latest portrait of the prince ascribed to Velazquez is probably the full-length numbered 1083 in the Prado, representing him at about the age of fifteen, in a black court suit. Justi calls it one of the few indifferent works by the master. In the absence of any decisive evidence in its favour it is impossible to accept it as the master's work at all.

The great equestrian *Olivares*, on the other hand, is one of the painter's acknowledged masterpieces. The Count-Duke masquerades as a general, waving his imaginary troops down to the battlefield, the smoke of which rises in heavy columns to the sky. The Minister had never been in action, and to those who did not love him his military pretensions were a constant source of mirth. He nevertheless looks martial enough, as seen by Velazquez. Several small replicas and copies of this picture exist. The original was probably painted either shortly before or shortly after the equestrian portrait of Philip.

A word must be said in passing of two other equestrian portraits (Nos. 1604 and 1605 in the Prado) in which the hand of Velazquez is recognisable in the horses and landscape. These are the portraits of the king's father and mother, Philip III. and Margarita of Austria, most likely painted by Pantoja de la Cruz or Bartolomé Gonzalez. A Spanish tradition asserts that Philip IV. himself worked upon these canvases. Both pictures have been enlarged by pieces added at either side, to fit them, no doubt, for places in the Sala de los Reinos at Buen Retiro.

In 1642 the king, roused at last from his apathy by the French successes and the revolt of his own subjects in Catalonia, left the capital for the seat of war in the north. Much was expected from the enthusiasm the royal presence was sure to excite, but such patriotic hopes were doomed to disappointment. Olivares detained the king at Saragossa, and inaugurated a round of festivities in which the money so much needed for the expenses of the campaign was recklessly squandered. In 1644 the king, alarmed by the loss of Perpignan and Roussillon, again took the field. Velazquez followed in the train of his royal master, and is known to have painted at Fraga a portrait of the king "in a scarlet gold-embroidered doublet and hose, smooth leather collar, and white hat with red plume." A portrait of the dwarf, El

Primo, was painted at the same time. Justi suggests that this Fraga portrait is the half-length in the Dulwich Gallery. Here, however, the

*The Count-Duke Olivares. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

costume differs in some essential points from that described by Palomino; the king is too young for the date; and the general workmanship is too

feeble for the master himself. It is probably a repetition by Mazo of some picture lost in the Alcazar fire.

Among the master's more notable sitters of his so-called middle period was Francisco de Quevedo. The poet and philosopher was painted before his disgrace, probably while he still held the office of secretary to the king. Quevedo, who had injured his sight in youth by voracious reading, wears large, dark-rimmed spectacles. This picture, a bust in a dark doublet, on the breast of which is sewn the cross of Santiago, is at Apsley House, and the head may be compared with that in the so-called *Betrothal* recently presented to the National Gallery by Lord Savile as a picture by Velazquez. The date of the fine portrait of the sculptor Martinez Montañes, formerly supposed to represent Alonso Cano, is determined by a curious document discovered by Bermudez in the archives of the Spanish Board of Trade. Montañes is shown modelling a head of Philip, a work he was summoned from Seville to undertake in 1635, probably at the instance of Velazquez. This head, like the picture already spoken of, was for the use of the Florentine, Tacca, in the execution of his statue. The document above mentioned is a piteous appeal for settlement of the Sevillian sculptor's claims in respect of this work. Instead of paying in cash, Philip had given him an order on the Sevillian Chamber of Commerce empowering him to choose a vessel from the Indian fleet with which to trade for his private advantage. No such ship was, however, available, and twelve years afterwards he sets forth his hard case in writing. He relates how he had been ordered by the king "to prepare an effigy of his royal person, to be sent to the Grand Duke of Florence, who had requested it for his equestrian statue. In consequence of this he had abandoned house and business, and spent over seven months at court, executing the commission so much to His Majesty's satisfaction that the effigy was forthwith despatched to Florence." How the sculptor's petition fared we have no evidence to show.

Three other portraits of Spanish worthies remain to be mentioned. The most important is that of the truculent Admiral, Adrian Pulido da Pareja, in the National Gallery. This was painted in 1639. Pulido had greatly distinguished himself at the victory of Fontarabia in 1638, when the attempt of the French under Condé to seize a stronghold which

*Admiral Pulido da Pareja. National Gallery.*

would have given them a footing within the Spanish frontier had resulted in their total rout. Palomino describes the picture at considerable length. He tells us that Velazquez signed and dated it, contrary to his usual custom, "because it is among the most famous painted by [him]." It bears the inscription :—

Did. Velasqz. Philip IV. à
cubiculo
eiusq ! pictor 1639.

The name Adrian Pulido Pareja has been added much later, by some other hand. The story of how Philip, during one of his frequent incursions upon the painter, mistook the portrait for the admiral himself, and scolded it for not being at his post in the Indies, is usually told as much to damage Philip as to glorify Velazquez. It is sad that a jest so kindly meant should have so miscarried ! It is in connection with this picture that Palomino first speaks of the long brushes used by Velazquez, which enabled him to keep both canvas and sitter in focus at the same time. The portraits of Don Antonio Pimentel, Count of Benevente, and Lord of the Bedchamber to Philip (No. 1090 in the Prado), and of Cardinal Borgia, Bishop of Seville (in the Staedel Institute, Frankfort), are more delicate in quality. Borgia returned to Madrid in 1636, after a residence of twenty-two years in Rome. His spirited opposition to the anti-Spanish policy of the Papal Court had long made him obnoxious to Urban VIII., who, after vainly demanding his recall, managed to rid himself of his adversary by reviving the bull which required all bishops to live in their sees. On his return the Cardinal's patriotic zeal was rewarded by the highest honours. He was associated with the queen in her brief regency, and in 1643 was created Archbishop of Toledo. This dignity, however, he only enjoyed two years. The portrait was painted, perhaps, on his elevation to the primacy. There is a replica at Toledo, and doubt is possible as to which is the original.

Numerous portraits of Olivares scattered in various collections represent the Minister in the last years of his power. They seem all to be derived from a common source, and are probably nearly all copies made in the studio, and in some cases retouched by the master. The

portrait of Julianillo, the Minister's natural son by Doña Isabel de Anversa, a frail beauty of Madrid, is one of the last memorials of the connection between Velazquez and the favourite. Julianillo, who

*The Wife of Velazquez. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

had led a vagabond life throughout his youth, came to Madrid in 1640, when he was legitimised by Olivares, whose heir he became. After the Minister's disgrace and death in 1643, Julianillo was banished from the court. The portrait must therefore have been painted between 1640 and 1642.

If, as seems to be generally agreed, the two studies of a little girl in the Prado (Nos. 1087 and 1088) belong to the master's middle period, we must reject the traditional title of *The Daughter of Velazquez*, for Ignacia died in infancy, and Francisca, born in 1619, was of an age to marry her father's pupil Mazo in 1634. The so-called *Sybil*

*The Family of Velazquez. Imperial Gallery, Vienna. From a Photograph by Löwy.*

(No. 1086 in the Prado), a dark-haired woman in gray and yellow, holding a tablet, was formerly supposed to represent Juana de Miranda Pacheco, the wife of Velazquez, under which title she figures in the catalogue. The half-length of a richly-dressed lady which passed from the Dudley Gallery to the Berlin Museum also claims this distinction. They certainly do not depict the same person, nor is it easy to trace a likeness between either of the two and the seated lady

in the so-called *Family of Velazquez* at Vienna. Another enigmatic female portrait of this period is the beautiful half-length of the *Lady with the Fan* at Hertford House. The authorship of all these pictures, however, is open to discussion, as well as the identity of the persons represented. The question must be postponed for the present.

We may close the tale of notable portraits with that of the youthful Francesco II., Duke of Modena, in the Modena Gallery, which, however, I have not seen. Francesco had espoused the cause of Spain in the struggle over the Mantuan succession, and was looked upon at the Spanish Court as an ally whose friendship it would be politic to retain. He was accordingly invited to Madrid, where he arrived in September 1638. He was warmly received by the king and Olivares, and made himself very popular during his stay at Buen Retiro, winning the hearts of the Madrileños by his agreeable manners, and that of the king by his skill as a sportsman. He received the Order of the Golden Fleece, and was requested to act as sponsor to the Infanta Maria Theresa. Velazquez painted him, and he was much impressed by the genius of the master, to whom he presented a rich gold chain which Diego, "as was the custom, wore on feast-days in the palace." Velazquez also began an equestrian portrait of the duke for Philip, and a replica for Francesco himself, with which he seems to have made but slow progress. He was at work on these in the following year, as we learn from a despatch of the Modenese envoy, Testi, to his master. "Velasco," he says, "is doing the portrait of your Highness, which will be admirable. But he has the failing of other great artists, that he never finishes right off and never tells one the truth" (!). These pictures seem never to have been completed. They were perhaps put aside when the duke deserted his Spanish allies and declared for France.

Two remarkable pictures were added to the short list of the master's devotional works at this period. The famous *Crucifixion* (No. 1055 in the Prado) was painted for the Convent of San Placido, probably about 1638, when the community was reinstated in its former honours and privileges after a temporary eclipse due to the displeasure of the Inquisition. The isolated figure on the cross, standing out in strong relief against a plain dark background, has the peculiarly sculpturesque character which justifies Stirling-Maxwell's comparison of it to "an

ivory carving on a black velvet shroud." The modelling of the body has been enthusiastically admired, and the drooping head, half concealed by the black, matted hair which falls over it like a veil, is both deeply poetical and realistic. But the *ensemble* is unconvincing, a result due, no doubt, to the combination of a realistically treated head with a body in which the conventional pose and action have been accepted.

*Christ at the Pillar. National Gallery.*

The poignant note is struck more resolutely in the *Christ at the Pillar* of the National Gallery. The early history of this picture is unknown. It was bought in Madrid towards the middle of the present century, and made a great impression when it was seen at Manchester in 1857. In 1883 Sir John Savile Lumley, now Lord Savile, presented it to the nation. The subject is one often treated by painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It represents a probable incident of the Passion not described in the gospel narrative. The fainting

Saviour, left alone for a time after the scourging, has sunk to the ground among the instruments of His torture, His wrists still bound with cords to a column on the right. To the left, a child in a long bluish tunic kneels in adoration, obedient to the gesture of his guardian angel, a curiously muscular figure in draperies of orange and dull purple. On the evidence of style this picture belongs to the very beginning of the master's third period, while the influence of Italy, and especially of Guido, was still strongly upon him. The slightly effeminate pathos, the silvery tones, the inertness of the action, all vividly recall the Bolognese painter.

Of the master's private life throughout this fruitful period we know little. Its chief event outside the studio was the marriage of his daughter Francisca to Juan Bautista del Mazo-Martiñez. The wedding took place in 1634. Mazo's works are, ostensibly, little known out of his native country, and those who have written on Velazquez have taken strangely little pains to estimate his true place in the master's career. He and the Morisco, Juan de Pareja, are probably the true authors of many a treasured "Velazquez." Born at Madrid about 1610, Mazo entered the studio during the first decade of the master's court career, and became one of his most skilful assistants and imitators. Palomino commends him as excelling equally in history, portrait, and landscape, and so proficient was he as a copyist that it was said to be impossible to distinguish his reproductions of Venetian pictures in the king's collection from their originals! He took a second wife after the death of Francisca in 1658 (?), and succeeded his father-in-law as court painter, surviving him by some twenty-seven years. The two acknowledged pictures by himself at Madrid show that he was a painter of great power and dexterity, bearing somewhat the same relation to Velazquez as Jordaens did to Rubens. His portrait, by Alonso Cano, is in the Prado Gallery.

Of the master's relations with contemporary artists we catch a few brief glimpses during this period. Among the painters attracted to Madrid by the building and decoration of Buen Retiro were his friends and fellow-citizens Zurbaran and Alonso Cano. Both owed much of their success in the capital to the good offices of Velazquez. A more important advent was that of the young Murillo in 1641. Born at Seville in 1618, he had early shown his aptitude for art, which he studied

under Juan del Castillo. On the conclusion of his apprenticeship he acted as his master's assistant, but was thrown on his own resources when Castillo removed to Cadiz. For a time he earned a scanty

*The Daughter of Velazquez. Museo del Praao, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

livelihood by painting small devotional pictures and images for the traders to Peru and Mexico and for the holders of booths at local fairs. By such means as these he gathered a modest sum of money. This enabled him to find his way to Madrid, where he sought the presence of his great compatriot at the Alcazar. Fired by the tales of

Vandyck's career in England, as set forth by one Pedro de Moya, a roving Sevillian who had followed the Flemish painter to London, Murillo is said to have once intended to settle in this country. Velazquez, however, who received the obscure youth with great kindness, seems to have dissuaded him from doing so. He received every facility for the prosecution of his studies in the capital. Velazquez procured him free access to the pictures in the palace, where he was able to work at leisure during the king's absence in Aragon. No doubt, too, the master opened the stores of his own ripe wisdom for the young man's guidance, and must therefore be credited with that revolution in the young Sevillian's art which so amazed his friends on his return to the south in 1643.

# CHAPTER V

## SECOND VISIT TO ITALY

### 1649–1651

Not the least important of the offices filled by Velazquez at court was that of Director of the royal galleries, and of the work of alteration and enlargement which was going on in certain parts of the Alcazar. New rooms had been built, and many old ones transformed. These the king was now anxious to decorate in the Italian manner. Agostino Mitelli and Michelangelo Colonna were then at the height of their reputation, having successfully applied their new system of perspective and figures to many important buildings in Florence, Bologna, and other Italian cities. Their art was unknown among contemporary Spanish painters, who showed little aptitude for decoration. Fresco painting, after a brief and inglorious career, had completely died out in Spain. Walls to which this method would have been applied in Italy were decorated, when decorated at all, either by tapestries or painted canvases shaped to fit them. Philip, whose operations in the palace had been mainly directed to giving it a lighter and more cheerful character, determined to secure the services of the two Italian decorators. He was also anxious to purchase some of the treasures that only Italy could supply, for the pictures of the royal collection were insufficient for the adornment of the new rooms, while statues and casts from the great antiques were also included in the scheme of decoration. For the successful carrying out of all this it was necessary that a competent agent should be despatched to Italy. Velazquez was no doubt eager to renew his former impressions, and to taste some months of freedom from the monotony of court

life. He promised the king that if he were sent on this mission he would bring back "some of the best work of Titian, Paolo Veronese, Bassano, Raphael, Parmigiano and the like." Late in the autumn of 1648 he started from Madrid. He travelled as before, in the train of a State commissioner, but one bound on an errand very different from that of his former protector. The alliance between the royal houses of Spain and Austria, which the untimely death of Balthazar Carlos had broken off, was again on the *tapis*. The dangers that threatened the State through the want of a male heir had been strongly urged on the king by the Cortes, and Philip had now offered himself as the groom of that fourteen-year-old niece of his own who had been betrothed to his son. The Duke of Najera had been appointed a special ambassador to bring home the bride, and Velazquez joined his train.

The company embarked at Malaga, a route adopted to avoid both the plague-stricken ports of Alicante and Valencia and the disturbances still rife in Catalonia. Landing at Genoa after a stormy passage, the painter travelled through Milan and Padua to Venice, leaving Najera and the rest of the embassy to pursue their own course northwards to Trent. Venice was then the chief picture market of Italy, but Velazquez was a less successful buyer than he had hoped to be. Competition had become keen. Most of the princely collectors of the day had agents in the city, to whom those who had anything to sell preferred to make the first offer of their wares. The trade in pictures was already a recognised and lucrative calling, carried on by men such as Niccolò Rinieri and Paolo del Sera, half collectors, half dealers, whose names occur in the history of so many famous works.

Charles I. of England had sent his *Kapellmeister*, Nicholas Lanière, to Italy to buy for him, while Christina of Sweden and the Archduke Leopold William were also in the field. According to Palomino, Velazquez secured but four pictures in Venice. A *Venus and Adonis* by Paolo Veronese (No. 526 in the Prado), a sketch by Tintoretto for the great *Paradiso* in the Doges' Palace (No. 428) and two other subjects by the same hand. Boschini, however, whom Velazquez charmed by the courtesy and distinction of his bearing, speaks further of two Titians. From Venice the master travelled through Florence and Bologna to Rome. Here he found himself obliged to go on

immediately to Naples, to present his letters of introduction to the Conde Oñata, the Viceroy who was instructed to give him all possible facilities for carrying out the objects of his journey. The painter's business in Naples seems to have been more especially the selection of casts from the antique. He found leisure to renew his acquaintance with Spagnoletto, then in his first grief at the loss of his beautiful daughter. Maria Rosa Ribera, a beautiful girl and her father's usual model for the Madonna, had been seduced and carried off by Don John of Austria (the less), Philip IV.'s natural son. Don John had come to Naples in 1647 to put down Masaniello's revolt, and had been introduced into Spagnoletto's household by its imprudent master himself. By Maria Ribera he had a daughter, who lived and died in the Royal Convent of Barefooted Nuns at Madrid.

His business in Naples concluded, Velazquez returned to Rome, entering the Eternal City in time for the celebration of the Jubilee of 1650. The anti-Spanish Urban VIII. had been succeeded by Innocent X., formerly Cardinal Pamfili, and the diplomatic relations of Spain and Italy were less strained than on the occasion of the painter's former visit. But great popular indignation had been awakened by the severity with which Don John had put down the Neapolitan rising. Many of the refugees had fled to Rome, where the citizens openly sympathised with their wrongs, and Spaniards were hardly more favourably regarded than under the Barberini. Velazquez, however, as the emissary of His Most Catholic Majesty, was received with all possible consideration. The Pamfili were less munificent patrons of art than the Barberini, but nevertheless the city still sheltered a large colony of artists. Many of these had been engaged on the public monuments to be unveiled at the Jubilee. Among those with whom Velazquez now came into contact were the aged Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Pietro Berettini of Cortona, Michelangelo Cerquozzi, and the sculptors, Bernini, François du Quesnoy, and Alessandro Algardi. We have no direct evidence of negotiations between Velazquez and Bernini or Algardi. But the many replicas of their works which afterwards found their way to the Alcazar were doubtless commissioned by him. The sculptors may have helped him, too, in procuring casts, or even moulds, from the Roman

antiques. Boschini bears witness to his acquaintance with Salvator by his report of a conversation between the two painters, which, he says, he received from Velazquez himself. Its theme was the fame of Raphael, whose art Velazquez confessed "pleased him not at all," earning by the phrase another claim to be called the father of modern painting! Salvator Rosa was then at the height of his reputation, and it is curious that Velazquez should have taken back no example of his work to Madrid. But Salvator was known to have been in Naples at the time of Masaniello's rising and to have openly confessed his sympathy with the movement, and policy may have required that the royal patronage should be withheld from such an upholder of sedition.

One of the events of the Jubilee year was the opening of the Roman Museum of Antiquities in the Capitol, a solemnity which gave expression to the lively interest felt at the time in the great classical monuments. Velazquez had no lack of competent advisers in the task he had before him. Among the famous connoisseurs and collectors of the day were three with whom his relations were probably very intimate, Camillo Massini (afterwards a cardinal), whose portrait he painted, the Cavalier Cassiano del Pozzo, and Cardinal Girolamo Colonna. The last named was a *persona grata* at Madrid. He had studied in his youth at Alcalà, and had kept up a friendly intercourse with the Spanish Court for years. It was he who presented the famous *Apotheosis of Claudius* to Philip IV., perhaps on this occasion of that king's commissioner's presence in Rome.

Accounts differ as to the extent of the painter's undertakings during this visit. According to Palomino, he obtained moulds, from which bronze and plaster casts were made after his return to Madrid. Other writers state that the reproductions were actually cast in Rome, and brought back ready for their places in the palace. The former statement is probably the true one, as we hear from different sources that on the foundation of the San Fernando Academy of Art by Philip V., a collection of moulds from masterpieces of antique sculpture was handed over to its managers. The more important of the painter's selections were the *Laocoön*, the *Apollo*, the *Antinoüs*, the *Venus*, the *Cleopatra*, and the *Nilus* of the Belvidere, the *Hercules* and the *Flora* of the Farnese Palace (now at Naples), the *Wrestlers* from the Villa

*Pope Innocent X. Doria-Pamfili Palace, Rome.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

Medici (now in the Uffizi), the *Hermaphrodite*, the *Hercules* and the *Satyr with the Infant Bacchus*, now in the Louvre, the *Dying Gladiator* and the *Mercury* of the Villa Ludovisi, and the *Youth extracting a Thorn*, of the Capitol. Of all the reproductions brought back by Velazquez, the best were set up in the new rooms, the rest distributed throughout the palace.

This second sojourn of Velazquez in Rome is illumined in his artistic career by the production of one of his most extraordinary pictures. Innocent X. decided to honour the Spaniard by sitting for his portrait. The result was the wonderful canvas in the Doria-Pamfili Palace, the study for which is supposed to be in Apsley House. Before embarking on so important a commission, Velazquez, whose powers might have rusted since he had left Madrid, painted a half-length of his slave, Pareja, producing so startling a likeness that the friends to whom he sent it by the hand of the original looked from the live man to the man of paint, "doubting which they should address." In accordance with a popular custom of the day, this portrait was hung with other pictures in the cloister of the Pantheon on the Feast of S. Joseph (March 19), where it was greeted with acclamations by all the painters in Rome. The author was immediately elected to the Academy of St. Luke.

Two portraits of Pareja, both in English collections, claim the honour of identity with this famous work. One is at Castle Howard, the other at Longford Castle. We reproduce the former on p. 39. The Moor, who wears a dark-green doublet, with a broad white collar, turns to the spectator proudly and confidently, with the air of a connoisseur who knows himself in the hands of a master. Born at Seville in 1606, Pareja followed Velazquez to Madrid in 1623, and remained with him till his death. He was first employed as studio boy, but watched his master to such purpose that he taught himself to paint, and imitated the manner of Velazquez with considerable success. He was, the story goes, so quiet about it that at the time of the Roman visit Velazquez had no idea of his slave's proficiency. Pareja is said to have at last revealed himself by placing one of his own works in his master's studio. It was noticed by the king, who at once gave the Moor his freedom. Pareja is said to have excelled in portraiture,

but he also painted subject pictures in a style rather Venetian than Spanish, for his fancy had been caught by the great masters he had seen in Italy. The Madrid Gallery has a *Calling of St. Matthew* by him

*Pope Innocent X. Collection of the Duke of Wellington.*

in which his own portrait is introduced. The head agrees in all essentials with that painted by Velazquez, though Pareja has ventured to soften the Moorish character of his own features.

Innocent X. was seventy-four when he sat to Velazquez, but con-

temporaries describe him as having preserved in an unusual degree that air of commanding vigour suggested by the master. The seated figure is turned slightly to the left, and the strong sinister face confronts the spectator with a look in which cunning, secretiveness, and a touch of sensuality are combined. The dictum of Mengs that Velazquez seemed not to paint, but to will his figures on to the canvas, and the oft-quoted Spanish description of the master's manner—*non pintura ma verdad*—seem to us the very sobriety of criticism while we sit in the little cabinet in which this Pope enjoys an eternity of state denied to others. Beside the "Innocent" of Velazquez, even the Leo X. of Raphael, to say nothing of the Julius II., seems lifeless and wooden.

Innocent's ugliness has been minutely described by contemporaries. His coarse and sensual features were made yet more unattractive by a red complexion and a habitually forbidding expression. These defects are said to have been seriously urged as a reason for refusing him the tiara in 1645. It is said, too, that Guido, annoyed at a reproof received from the then Cardinal Pamfili while he was working in St. Peter's, gave his features to Satan in the St. Michael of the Capuccini. In the Doria-Pamfili picture the reds of the cap, the robe, and the chair, and the Pope's own ruddy flesh-tones, are reinforced by the crimson of the curtain behind him. This curtain disappears in the Apsley House picture, where the superbly-modelled head is set against a plain dark-gray background. In his left hand the Pope holds a letter with the following inscription :—

Alla Santtà di N^ro. Sig^re.
Innocencio X^o.
Per
Diego de Silva
Velazquez de la Ca
mera di S. M^tà. Catt^ca.

Innocent was satisfied with the picture, and presented Velazquez with a gold chain and a medallion of himself on its completion. He also paid him with his own hand. Velazquez is said to have refused payment from the papal chamberlain, on the sufficient ground, in those punctilious days, that his own master always paid him himself. To have accepted payment from the servant of another employer would

have been to admit an inferiority in Philip. The success of the Pope's portrait is said to have brought Velazquez many would-be sitters. Among the accepted few were the Pope's sister-in-law, Olympia Maldachini, Flaminia Triunfi, and Girolamo Bibaldi.

In spite of repeated hints from Madrid, the painter seems to have lingered on in Italy. But at last the king's positive command for his return reached him in a letter from Don Fernando Ruiz de Contreras. Sending his collections off to the care of the Spanish Viceroy at Naples, he accordingly started for Genoa, where it had been arranged that the painters Mitelli and Colonna should meet him and return with him to Madrid. At the last moment, however, he had the mortification of finding that these men had broken their word and had elected to remain in Florence and work for Cardinal de' Medici. It was not until 1658 that they paid their promised visit to Madrid, where they worked at the decoration of the palace for nearly four years. Another disappointment awaited him at Modena, which he visited on his way in the vain hope of securing some examples of Correggio, notably the *Nativity*, which, some ten years earlier, had been forcibly removed by Duke Francesco from San Prospero in Reggio.[1]

Embarking at Genoa, Velazquez landed at Barcelona in June 1651. The king expressed his satisfaction with the results of his mission, and in the following November the master's salary, both as court painter and inspector of works, was paid up in full for the whole term of his absence.

[1] *Antonio Allegri da Coreggio* (Heinemann, London, 1895), by Corrado Ricci, p. 295.

## CHAPTER VI

### APOSENTADOR MAYOR—DEATH

### 1651–1660

In February 1652 Velazquez, on his own petition, was appointed to the office which cost him his life. The post, which he asked for as one specially suited to his gifts and position, was that of *Aposentador Mayor*, or Palace Marshal to the king, which had become vacant during his absence in Italy. It was an office of considerable dignity and importance, but no sinecure. The Marshal, among his multifarious duties, was solely responsible for all the interior arrangements of the palace. It was his duty to inspect all the details of lighting, heating, sanitation, decoration, etc.; to assign apartments to the various persons in waiting; to organise all court festivities, drawing up programmes of the entertainments for submission to the king; and finally, to act as quartermaster during the royal progresses. Those who have travelled in Spain, even in our own day, will understand what the task of transporting a luxurious court across such a country must have been in the seventeenth century, when to the difficulties of obtaining supplies and quarters were added the harassing minutiæ of a rigid and bewildering etiquette. The letters of "those argus-eyed Venetian envoys, who surprised so many courts and cabinets in their unguarded moments, and daguerreotyped their character and policy for the instruction of the crafty Republic," are full of indignant lamentations over the horrors of Spanish travel. Velazquez had need of all his courtesy and tact under the responsibilities of his new office. The broader and more summary manner of his last decade may have been induced to some extent by the

high pressure under which he worked, but his art shows no trace of deterioration. Rather does it take on a new luxuriance under difficulties, 'as grass grows tallest round a stone.' His new office was closely allied to his other important post, the directorship of the royal galleries. For some time after his return from Italy he was busy over the distribution of the works of art he had collected, and the general rearrangement of the collections. The year 1654 witnessed the long-delayed completion of the Escorial. The building of the Pantheon, or sepulchral crypt, under the high altar, which was a charge laid by Philip II. on his son, had been delayed till this time by structural difficulties. On March 15 Philip IV. attended the solemn removal of his ancestors' remains from their temporary resting-place in the upper church. Deeply impressed by the function, one feature of which was the opening of the royal coffins for inspection,[1] the king conceived the idea of showing his respect for his grandfather's great work by a gift of some of his choicest pictures to the Escorial. These were hung in the great sacristy by the direction of Velazquez. "To him," says Fray Francisco de los Santos,[2] "is it due that the Escorial, no less than the Royal Palace, is remarkable as much for its paintings as for its architecture. Velazquez it was who fitted up the sacristy, the aulilla, and the prior's chapter-house; nay, the very pictures with which he adorned those places were brought together by himself from various parts of Europe." This handsome tribute seems curious in the light of the accusation brought against De los Santos by modern Spanish writers, who assert that his descriptions of the new pictures are boldly conveyed from a series of notes made by Velazquez himself, which are mentioned by Palomino. "Velazquez," says the latter, "composed a description or *Memoria*, in which he gave particulars of their excellence, their authors, and the places where

[1] Quirini, the Venetian envoy, described the appearance of the Emperor Charles V.'s body. "The likeness of the Emperor to his portrait," he wrote, "could be recognised quite well. He had a rather full fair beard; the body was under the average size, the bones thin, the flesh dry and meagre. Nose and lips, fingers and toes, were deformed by the gout, which does not even spare the dead." The great Emperor's tomb was again opened in 1870. Decay had not made any great progress in two centuries and a quarter. The likeness of Charles to his portraits could still be recognised, and the ravages of the gout still traced. Palmaroli made a sketch of the body as it lay. This sketch was lent by Lady Layard to the New Gallery in the present year (1896).

[2] *Short Description of the Monastery of San Lorenzo El Real*, 1657.

they (formerly) hung, in order to explain them to His Majesty, and with so much elegance and propriety that the document is a proof of his great learning and judgment." No trace of this *Memoria* has ever been found in the Spanish archives. In 1871, however, one Adolfo de Castro of Cadiz announced that he had discovered it in print. It was in the form of a short pamphlet, issued in 1658 by Don Juan de Alfaro of Cordova, a pupil of Velazquez, his object being the vindication of the painter's literary fame. Don Adolfo declared that the entire contents of this pamphlet were to be found scattered through the friar's descriptions. The *trouvaille* lacks authentication, however. We must leave Fray Francisco in possession of his critical laurels for the present, and accept the loss of the *Memoria* as resignedly as that of the angel of whom Dante "drew the resemblance upon certain tablets."

The forty-one pictures have a special interest for English readers, as the list includes four from the rich harvest reaped by Don Alonzo de Cardeñas at the sale of Charles I.'s collection.[1] Cardeñas bought nominally for Don Luis de Haro, the nephew and successor of Olivares, who, however, promptly handed over his purchases to the king. Philip probably felt some compunction at this greedy falling upon the spoil of his unhappy brother-monarch, for Sir Edward Hyde (Clarendon) and the aged Sir Francis Cottington, the representatives of Charles II. at Madrid, suddenly received their passports when the ship bearing the treasures landed at Corunna. The English king's adherents complained bitterly of the eagerness with which contemporary princes competed for their master's property, and De los Santos is careful in his description to speak of the Stuart pictures as gifts to the Crown, in the acquisition of which Philip himself had no hand.

In the midst of these various preoccupations Velazquez nevertheless found time to produce a series of great works on which his fame as a master of the first rank might securely have rested, had all his earlier pictures perished. The fruits of this last and greatest period group themselves round two great compositions, the wonderful *Maids of Honour*

[1] These four were: Paolo Veronese's *Marriage at Cana* (No. 534 in the Prado); Tintoretto's *Christ washing the Feet of the Disciples;* Andrea del Sarto's *Madonna and Child with an Angel;* and the so-called Raphael, *La Perla.*

(*Las Meniñas*), and the still more consummate *Tapestry Workers* (*Las Hilanderas*), both in the Prado Gallery ; while the list of portraits includes the magnificent head of Philip in the National Gallery, the amazing

*Philip IV. National Gallery.*

costume pictures of the young Queen Mariana, and of the little Infanta Margarita, and that strange series of dwarfs, fools, and other eccentric ornaments of the royal household, which so vivaciously

illustrates the 'beauty of ugliness.' To all these must be added the mythological subjects, painted probably to the king's order for the Hall of Mirrors in the Alcazar, and those religious pieces in which the colour-music of Italy finds a last echo in the master's art.

The finest of the late portraits of Philip is the well-known bust in our own National Collection (No. 745). Many copies and studio replicas exist, among them one in the Prado (No. 1080) and another in the Vienna Gallery (No. 612).

A bewildering number of portraits attest Philip's devotion to his second wife, the girlish hoyden who is said to have commanded a fidelity denied to the high-minded Isabella. Many of these were certainly painted by Mazo and other followers of Velazquez. So great was the king's impatience to possess her effigy that he would not await the return of his painter from Italy. Mariana made her triumphal entry into Madrid in November 1649, and Mazo at once executed a portrait which Palomino pronounced "a marvel of the brush." Of her portraits painted by Velazquez after his return, the earliest were sent to her own family, and have now become difficult of identification. Of the two large full-lengths in the Prado (Nos. 1078 and 1079) the least open to question is the first in order, in which the rose-coloured curtain of the background is gathered more closely away to the right. She wears a costume of black trimmed with silver, and rests her right hand on the back of a chair. Seeing her in the portentous costume of a Spanish lady of the period, her young features set in a weary peevishness natural enough in the victim of such monstrous bravery, we fail to recognise the frolicsome princess described by Spanish writers. Mariana delighted in such practical joking as the letting loose of a number of mice among her ladies, and incurred the rebuke of her duenna for laughing too loudly at the jests of her dwarfs. The grotesque clothes, here so faithfully portrayed, amazed the French and Italian ladies. Ameyden, the Spanish envoy in Rome, describing the arrival of the Duke of Arcos and his suite, remarks in his *Diario:* "Rome stands aghast at the vile and offensive Spanish female dress, comparing it with past times, when it was so becoming." Velazquez contrived, by unerring taste, to reconcile us in some degree to its absurdity, but he would perhaps have found that task beyond even his powers had his sitters

been of less exalted rank. Hieratic costumes require a hieratic carriage.

Philip's daughter by his first marriage, the Infanta Maria Theresa,

*The Infanta Margarita. Imperial Gallery, Vienna.*
*From a Photograph by Löwy.*

was only three years younger than her stepmother, and the two princesses were companions for nearly twelve years. The younger princess acted as sponsor to her own step-sister, the little Infanta Margarita (born

July 12, 1651), and was a prominent figure at all the court festivities. In grace and charm she quite eclipsed her stepmother. The marriage with her cousin, Louis XIV., though projected for many years, was kept in abeyance during the interval when she was heir-presumptive to the Spanish Crown, but the negotiations were finally concluded after Mariana had borne her second son to Philip. Several portraits of the Infanta had meantime been sent to France at the request of her aunt, Anne of Austria. These were presumably painted in the studio of Velazquez, who is mentioned in a letter of Quirini's as about to undertake such works. They are now difficult to trace. One may be the picture formerly in the Morny Collection, and afterwards bought at the Lyne Stephens sale by Mr. Pierpont Morgan. The magnificent portrait of a young girl in a rose and white gown of more than the usual monstrous proportions, described in the Prado Catalogue (No. 1084) as a portrait of the Infanta Maria Theresa, is obviously, as Justi points out, not this princess, but the Infanta Margarita. A comparison with the little princess in *Las Meniñas*, to say nothing of the remarkable little picture in the *Salon Carré* of the Louvre, leaves no doubt upon this point.

The marriage of this delicious little daughter of Spain with a Hapsburg cousin had been predetermined almost from her infancy, and she was formally betrothed to the Emperor Leopold in 1664. Portraits of her were accordingly despatched to Vienna from time to time. The earliest shows her at about the age of four, in a rose-coloured frock embroidered with silver, her fair hair, innocent as yet of the monstrous devices of the court coiffeur, parted on one side, and tied with a knot of ribbons on the other. Here again she passes under the name of Maria Theresa. Another is almost identical with an example at Hertford House, while a third Vienna portrait (No. 620) answers to the work described by Palomino as sent to the Emperor in 1659. It is one of the finest examples of Velazquez out of Spain. It was accompanied by a portrait of Margarita's two-year-old brother, Prosper, the feeble infant who had succeeded the gallant young Balthazar Carlos as heir to the throne. Prosper was epileptic and hydrocephalous. Quirini describes him as "lethargic and colourless after the Austrian manner, with a large head, and but little strength in his knees." He adds that the child would

*The Infante Prosper. Imperial Gallery, Vienna.*
*From a Photograph by Löwy.*

let no one carry him but the aged Franciscan friar, Don Antonio de Castilla, "but their Majesties, who honour the holy habit with unequalled zeal and veneration, put up with this inconvenience with remarkable

*The Dwarf Don Antonio. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

fortitude." The poor weakling died in 1661 at the age of four, having survived his still feebler younger brother Ferdinand by a year. He had not lived in vain, for his portrait at Vienna is nearly as fine as that of

his sister. Philip's successor, his third son by Mariana, was born after the death of Velazquez.

The portraits of the dwarfs, buffoons, and imbeciles, indispensable features of the royal household at this period, may be glanced at before passing on to the two great subject-pictures. The more remarkable of these, with the exception of the portrait of El Primo, already mentioned as painted at Fraga, belong to the last decade. The buffoons, or jesters (*hombres de placer*), were painted for Buen Retiro, the dwarfs for the Alcazar. To the first category belong the three numbered respectively 1092, 1093, and 1094 in the Prado. They represent one Pablillos de Valladolid, who is depicted in the attitude of an actor, declaiming on the stage; Cristobal de Pernia, nicknamed "Barbarossa"; and an unknown, who was called "Don John of Austria." Some likeness in temper or appearance to a famous person was often taken advantage of by the buffoon, who dressed in imitation of his prototype, and burlesqued his conversation and manner. Five portraits of dwarfs have been preserved in the Prado: *El Primo*, in a black dress and slouch hat, seated on a stone in a hilly landscape; *Sebastian de Morra*, seated on the floor and gazing out at the spectator; *Don Antonio the Englishman*, richly dressed in a gold-embroidered suit and lace collar, holding a mastiff in leash; the so-called *Child of Vallicas*, an idiot seated in a field with a pack of cards in his hand; and yet another abortion, the *Fool of Coria*, seated on a stone with a gourd on either side, and his hands on his knee. Akin to these grotesque subjects are the two superb full-lengths of beggars, or ragged philosophers, christened respectively *Æsop* and *Mœnippus*.

*Las Meniñas*, or the *Maids of Honour*, the great picture in which most critics recognise the high-water mark of the genius of Velazquez, is, pictorially, a study of sunlight on figures in an interior. It is a Spanish De Hooch, enlarged. The episode which serves as its pretext is a visit of the king and queen to the studio, while the little Infanta Margarita is sitting for her portrait. To the right Velazquez stands facing us, before a tall canvas, paint-brush in hand and palette on thumb. The blonde figure of the little princess occupies the centre of the canvas. A maid of honour, kneeling, hands her a cup of water on a golden salver. The other bends and curtseys with

*Mœnippus. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

extended hands over her enormous *guarda infanta*. The names of these noble maidens are recorded. The first is Doña Maria Agostina, daughter of Don Diego Sarmiento; the second, Doña Isabel de Velasco, daughter of the Count of Fuensalida. The maids of honour were carefully selected from among the daughters of the old Castilian nobility for their beauty. As a foil to their youthful grace, we see in the foreground the grotesque figures of the princess's dwarfs, Maria Barbola and Nicolasico Pertusato. A fine mastiff dozes in front of them, which the dwarf, with characteristic malice, teases with his foot. In the shadow behind, two court officials, the *Señora de honor*, Doña Marcela de Ulloa, and a *guarda damas* (equerry to the court ladies) converse together, while farther in the background the queen's marshal, Don José Nieto, draws aside a curtain, flooding the darkened room with sunshine. The whole scene, as I understand it, is one of a child being induced to be good by her accustomed companions and playthings, and in the presence of her parents. The picture on the easel is, of course, this very canvas itself, so that the whole conception has an amusing involution. On the breast of the painter's doublet glows the red cross of Santiago, one of the great Spanish Orders. Tradition records that the king, looking at the finished picture, remarked that it lacked one thing, and, seizing a brush, himself added the decoration. Documents still preserved in the archives of Madrid show that the formalities connected with the master's reception date from some two years after the picture was painted. Velazquez received the papal dispensation necessary in his case as a married layman, and established the facts of his honourable life and spotless descent on both sides in 1659, when he received the habit. Palomino states that the cross in the picture was added by the king's order after the painter's death. In spite of all this the tradition may be true, for Spanish proceedings were never prompt, and the king would certainly not have troubled to do more than roughly indicate the cross with his brush; the present well-painted badge being added as Palomino says. A sketch of the picture belongs to Mr. Banks of Kingston Lacy; here, too, Velazquez wears the decoration.

In *Las Hilanderas* (the Spinners) the master again seizes a momentary effect in which a problem of light is involved. In

the quarter of Madrid known as Santa Isabella had been established, early in the reign of Philip IV., a factory for the weaving of tapestries which would, it was hoped, compete with the products of Flemish looms. In his capacity as *Aposentador del Rey*, Velazquez had charge of the hangings and tapestries for the palace, which he gave out on festive occasions to the *Tapicero mayor*, or court upholsterer. It was, no doubt, also his duty to arrange for the replenishment of the store, perhaps even to suggest subjects and furnish designs. On the occasion of one of his visits to the factory he may well have seen the materials for a picture in some such accidental group as he has here recorded. Three ladies, escorted perhaps by the Aposentador himself, have come to inspect or purchase. The piece submitted to them hangs in a sort of raised alcove in the background, lighted by a broad beam of sunshine from an unseen window. To this bright illumination is opposed the mysterious half-light of an ante-room, where an elderly woman and four young girls are at work, spinning, winding, and carding wool. The women have unusual beauty, notably the supple and finely-formed damsel on the right, who winds with a grand sweeping movement of her arm and body. *Las Hilanderas* hung originally in Buen Retiro, and later in the new palace. Strange to say, it is unnoticed by Palomino, and Mengs was the first writer to recognise its great importance. In its place in the *Sala de la Reina Isabel* it now receives more unstinted homage from members of his own craft than any other picture by Velazquez.

Of the five mythological subjects painted for the Mirror-Room in the Alcazar only three have survived. The room took its name from eight mirrors in ebony frames, which alternated with the windows, and with the five great portraits of the Spanish Hapsburgs by Titian, Rubens, and Velazquez. Above these were hung a series of mythologies and Biblical scenes, to which Velazquez contributed an *Apollo and Marsyas* and a *Venus and Adonis*, both of which have disappeared, the *Mars* (No. 1063 in the Prado), the *Mercury and Argus* (No. 1102), and the beautiful *Venus with the Mirror* at Rokeby Hall.

Of the two religious subjects with which we end the tale of the master's activity, one, the *Coronation of the Virgin*, probably painted for the oratory of Queen Mariana, was so alien to the realistic spirit of

*The Tapestry Workers.*

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*Æsop. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

his genius that we should rather wonder at its success than join in the chorus of depreciation which has too long been its portion. The general inspiration is unmistakably Italian, while in the palette we seem to recognise echoes of Moretto; and yet Velazquez can scarcely have seen much of the Brescian's work. The legendary visit of St. Anthony to the ancient St. Paul, in the Thebaid, was a theme more in harmony with the painter's natural tendencies. And yet, as a pictorial conception, it is difficult to see how his treatment of it can be put above the *Coronation of the Virgin*. The wild glen among the Sierras, where the event takes

*Mercury and Argus. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Sketch by Walter Osborne.*

place, and the heads of the saints themselves, are painted with extraordinary vigour and freedom, but the work as a whole is disconnected and anecdotal.

We must now turn from the final achievement of the painter Velazquez to watch his last and most imposing appearance on the stage of official life. In 1659, Spain, exhausted by a war of twenty-five years, and crippled by the reverses that had befallen her in the recent struggle against the combined forces of France and England, declared herself ready to accept terms of peace. Mazarin and Don Luis de Haro signed the Treaty of the Pyrenees on the neutral ground of the Isle of

Pheasants, in the Bidassoa, after a duel in which for four long months each had tried to outwit the other. France was conciliated by the cession of Artois and some important strongholds on the Belgian frontier; and it was agreed that the peace should be crowned by the long-projected marriage between Louis XIV. and the Infanta Maria Theresa, whose interest in the Spanish succession was renounced in consideration of a dowry of 500,000 crowns. The next episode was the handing over of the Infanta, and the subscription of the marriage contract. The Marquis de Grammont had visited Madrid some months earlier to formally demand the princess's hand for his master. Velazquez had been ordered to attend him throughout his visit, when no doubt many details of the approaching ceremony were discussed. April 15, 1660, was the date fixed for the departure of the royal *cortége* from the capital. Velazquez, on whom all the arrangements for the journey and the subsequent pageant devolved, set out some days before. Three assistants—his son-in-law Mazo, José da Villareal, and Damian Goetens —travelled with him.

The magnitude of the preparations for such a progress may be imagined. Two officers had preceded Velazquez, whose business it was to get the roads between Madrid and the frontier put in order. The personal suite of the royal family hardly exceeded in numbers those of some of the great nobles who travelled with the king. Don Luis de Haro had, for instance, a retinue of two hundred persons, and the advance guard of the procession entered Alcalà as the rear was quitting Madrid. Twenty-four halting-places had been prepared for the reception of the party between the capital and San Sebastian, and at each town on the route the king's passage was celebrated by masques, bull-fights, illuminations, and festivities of all sorts. The provincial nobles placed their castles, many of them bare enough in their plenishing, at the king's disposal, for no inns suitable for such guests existed in the country. The court reached San Sebastian on May 11, and there it stayed for three weeks. The interval Velazquez spent in preparing the Castle of Fontarabia for its reception, and in putting the finishing touches to the pavilion on the Isle of Pheasants, in which the culminating function was to take place. Priceless tapestries had been brought from Madrid for the adornment of this building, a temporary structure, consisting

*Coronation of the Virgin.  Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie.*

of a central hall, 56 feet long by 28 wide, and two sets of private apartments for the French and Spanish parties respectively. Each set contained a long gallery, three saloons, and a cabinet, and was connected with its own several mainland by a bridge of boats.

On June 7 the Infanta was handed over to her new family. The king, greatly overcome by the meeting with his sister Anne, after more than forty years of absence and estrangement, is said to have burst into tears, exclaiming, *Es el diablo que lo ha hecho.* He wept bitterly again on taking leave of his daughter. Maria Theresa herself, though pleased with her handsome bridegroom, quitted her native land with much emotion. The young Louis, though "appalled by her costume," thought her beautiful, and declared it would be easy to love her. Velazquez, says Palomino, played a prominent part in all the ceremonies, and was entrusted with the French king's presents to his father-in-law, the Badge of the Golden Fleece in diamonds, and a watch encrusted with the same gems. The magnificence of the painter's attire set off his handsome person to great advantage, and bore witness to his "loyal affection." The chronicler minutely describes his silver-braided costume, his cloak with the red cross of Santiago, his sword with its silver scabbard, and the heavy gold chain from which hung the jewelled badge of his Order. The return journey began on the following day, entailing fresh fatigue and exertion on the Aposentador, and on June 26 the whole party was once more safely housed in Madrid. It seems likely that the master's health had already begun to fail on the way, for a report of his death had preceded him to the capital, and his wife, his family, and friends could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw him return.

An ague, contracted perhaps on the frontier, and aggravated by the fatigue and anxiety of the journey, attacked him with great violence on the last day of July. The court doctor, Vincencio Moles, and the king's private physicians, Miguel de Alva and Pedro de Chavarri, recognised his case as hopeless from the first. Philip, deeply distressed, and seeing temporal help to be of no avail, sent Don Alonzo de Guzman, Archbishop of Tyre and Patriarch of the Indies, to minister to his spiritual needs; and the prelate, we are told, preached him a long sermon for the comfort of his soul. On Friday, August 6, 1660, at about two in the afternoon, the last Sacraments received, and his friend Don Gaspar de Fuensalida

appointed his executor, "he resigned his soul to Him who had created it for such a wonder of the world, leaving all in great grief, and not least

*Equestrian Statue of Velazquez at Paris. By M. Frémiet.*
*From a Photograph by Fiorillo.*

His Majesty, who, when his life was in suspense, gave all to understand how much he had loved and prized him."

According to the custom of the Order to which he belonged, the painter's body was dressed in the habit of the Knights of Santiago, and lay in state for twenty-four hours. At nightfall on the Saturday it was borne to its last resting-place in the Church of St. John the Baptist, and there deposited in the vault of Fuensalida.

In the archives of Simancas is preserved a document on the margin of which Philip bears witness to his grief at the loss of his favourite. It records a resolution passed by the Junta on August 15, to the effect that Don Diego's stipend of a thousand ducats should revert to the Treasury. When this was placed before the king for signature, he wrote on the margin in a trembling hand, *Quedo adbatido* (I am overwhelmed).

Velazquez left all he possessed to his wife Juana, who, however, survived him only a few days. His affairs were found, or at least declared, to be in great disorder. He was said to have exceeded his credit on the Treasury to the extent of one millon two hundred and twenty thousand maravedis, a total which looks less alarming when reduced to its equivalent of rather more than seven hundred pounds sterling. An embargo was laid upon his effects, which was removed some six years later on the payment by his son-in-law of half the asserted debt, the other half being remitted when investigation showed that the State was in debt to Velazquez.

The foregoing pages are practically confined to an account of the career of Velazquez as a man, and are based chiefly, though by no means exclusively, on the researches of Professor Justi. The next number of the *Portfolio* will be devoted to a discussion of his work as a painter.

# INDEX


"Adoration of the Kings, The," 12
"Adoration of the Shepherds, The," 12, 16
"Æsop," 90
"Aguador." *See* "Water-carrier"
Alcazar, The, 22, 23, 42, 52, 69, 71, 73, 84, 90, 94
Alcazar, Don Luis del, 18
Alcazar, Don Melchior del, 18
Alfaro, Don Juan de, 82
Algardi, Alessandro, 73
Alva, Miguel de, 100
Ameyden, 84
Andalusia, 11
Anne of Austria, 47, 100
"Antonio the Englishman," 90
"Apollo and Marsyas," 94
Apsley House, 12, 14, 60
Aquila, Conde del, 16
Aragon, 43, 56
Aranjuez, 43, 47
Ashburton, Lord, 47

Balsain, 44
Balthazar Carlos, The Infante, 43, 50, 51, 52, 54, 58, 72
"Balthazar Carlos on Horseback," 52
"Barbarossa," 90
Barberini, Cardinal, 38
Barcelona, 79
"Bebedores, Los," 32, 35, 41
Berettini, Pietro, 73
Berlin Gallery, 42, 65
Bermudez, Cean, 40
Bernini, Giovanni, 73
Bibaldi, Girolamo, 79
Bidassoa, The, 98
"Boar-Hunt, The," 44, 47
Bode, Dr., 35
Bologna, 37, 38, 72
Borgia, Cardinal, 63
Boschini, Marco, 38, 72, 74
Breda, 37, 49
"Breda, The Surrender of." *See* "Las Lanzas"
Buckingham Palace, 56, 68, 90, 94
Buen Retiro, 13, 43, 47, 48, 52, 54
Buonaparte, Joseph, 14

Calderon, 26, 48
Campaña. *See* Kempeneer
Cano, Alonzo, 60, 68
Capitol, The, 42, 74
Cardeñas, Alonzo de, 82
Carducho, Vincenzo, 24, 25
Carlos, Don (The Infante), 27
Castile, 44
Castilla, Don Antonio, 89
Castillo, Juan del, 69
Castle Howard, 56, 76
Castro, Adolfo de, 82
Castro, Juan Sanchez de, 7
Catalonia, 58
Caxesi, Eugenio, 24
Cerquozzi, Michelangelo, 73
Cespedes, Pablo de, 8
Charles I. (of England), 19, 26, 53, 72
Charles V. (Emperor), 20, 21, 24, 44, 81 (note)
Chavarri, Pedro de, 100
Chevreuse, Duchesse de, 47, 53
"Child of Vallicas, The," 90
"Christ at the Pillar," 67
Christina of Sweden, 72
Clarendon, 82
Coello, Sanchez, 22-24
Collantes, Francisco, 48
Colon, Hernan, 7
Colonna, Cardinal, 74
Colonna, Michelangelo, 71, 79
Condé, 60
Contreras, Don Fernando de, 79
Cook, Sir Francis, 14
"Coronation of the Virgin, The," 94, 97
Correggio, 14, 56, 79
Corte, Juan de la, 48
Cottington, Sir Francis, 82
Crescenzi, 25, 48
"Crucifixion, The," 43, 66, 67
Cruz, Pantoja de la, 24, 58

Domenichino, 40
Dorchester House, 27, 31
Doria-Pamfili Palace, 76
Dudley Collection, 65
Dulwich Gallery, 59

"Epiphany, The," 16
"Escorial, The," 32, 40, 81
Espinosa, Juan de, 21

Ferdinand, Emperor, 56
Ferdinand, King of Hungary, 42
Ferdinand VII. (of Spain), 13
Ferdinand, Don (The Infante), 18, 19, 44, 47, 51, 54
Fernandez, Alejo, 7
Ferrara, 37, 38
"Flagellation, The," 43 (*see* also "Christ at the Column")
Florence, 38, 68, 72, 79
Fonseca, Don Juan de, 18
Fontarabia, 60, 98
"Fool of Coria, The," 90
Ford, Richard, 12
"Forge of Vulcan, The," 40, 41
Fraga, 58, 90
Frankfort (Staedel Institute), 63
Frere, Sir Bartle, 17
Fuensalida, Don Gaspar, 100, 102

Goetens, Damian, 98
Gongora, Don Luis de, 18
Gonzaghi, The, 36
Gonzalez, Bartolomé, 24, 58
Grammont, Marquis de, 98
Granada, 25
Greco, El, 12
Guadarama, The, 50
Guido, 40, 41, 68
Guzman, Don Alonzo de, 100
Guzman, Don Gaspar. *See* Olivares
Genoa, 37, 38, 72, 79
Gerbier, Balthazar, 31

Hampton Court, 52
Haro, Don Luis de, 82, 97, 98
Henrietta Maria, 53, 54
"Hermits, The," 97
Herrera, Francisco de, 8, 11, 12
Herrera, Hernando de, 7
Hertford House, 52, 56, 66, 86
Heytesbury, Lord, 35
"Hilanderas, Las," 83, 93, 94
Huth, Mr. Edward, 31

Innocent X., 76-79
Isabella, The Infanta, 31
Isabella de Bourbon, Queen, 47, 51 52-54
Isle of Pheasants, The, 98
Italy, 21, 36-42, 71-79

John, Don (of Austria), 73
"John, Don (of Austria)," 90
"Joseph's Coat," 41
Julianillo, 64
Justi, Carl, 8, 11, 14, 35, 41, 51, 58, 86, 102
Justin of Nassau, 49, 50

Kempeneer, Peeter de, 8

"Lady with the Fan, The," 66
Lanière, Nicholas, 72
"Lanzas, Las," 37, 48-51
Legañes, Marquis de, 21, 57
Leonardo, José, 48

Leoni, Pompeo, 21
Leopold, The Emperor, 86
Leopold William, The Archduke, 72
Lerma, Duke of, 17, 28
Longford Castle, 76
Louis XIII., 36, 38
Louis XIV., 54, 86, 98, 100
Louis Philippe, 16
Louvre, The, 44, 86
Lucar, Duke of. *See* Olivares

Madrid, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18-21, 24, 27, 31, 42, 44, 48, 50, 66, 98
"Maids of Honour, The." *See* "Meniñas, Las"
Maino de Toledo, 25
Malaga, 72
Maldachini, Olympia, 79
Margarita, The Infanta, 58, 83, 85, 86, 90
Maria, The Infanta, 19, 42
Maria Theresa, The Infanta, 54, 66, 85, 86, 98, 100
Mariana of Austria, 56, 83, 86, 94
Masaniello, 73, 74
Massini, Camillo, 74
Mazarin, 97
Mazo-Martiñez, Juan Bautista del, 56, 60, 65, 68, 84, 98, 102
Medici, Cardinal F. de', 40
Medici, Cardinal G. de', 79
Medici, The Villa, 39, 40
Mengs, Raphael, 94
"Meniñas, Las," 83, 86, 90, 93
"Mercury and Argus," 94
Milan, 37, 72
Mitelli, Agostino, 71, 79
Mocenigo, 37
Modena, 79
Modena, Duke of, 66
Modena Gallery, 66
"Mœnippus," 90
Montañes, Benito, 7
Montañes, Martinez, 60
Monterey, Count, 21, 38, 40
More, Antonio, 22, 24, 27
Morgan, Mr. Pierpoint, 86
Morny Collection, 86
"Morra, Sebastian de," 90
Moya, Pedro de, 70
Murillo, 69, 70

Najera, Duke of, 72
Naples, 42, 73, 74
Naples Museum, 35
Nardi, Angelo, 24
National Gallery, 12, 16, 44, 60, 67, 83
Navarre, 56
Nevers, Duc de, 36
New Gallery, 14, 81 (note)
Nunez, Juan, 7

"Old Woman making an Omelet," 14
Olivares, 17-19, 26-31, 36, 42, 48, 52, 54, 56, 63, 64
"Olivares on Horseback," 52, 58
Olivares, The Countess, 54
Oñata, Count, 73
Oporto, 10
Orrente, Pedro, 48

Pablillos, 90
Pacheco, Francisco, 8, 11, 12, 16-18, 24, 32, 36, 41
Pacheco, Juana de Miranda, 11, 65, 102
Padua, 72
Palomino, 25, 37, 63, 68, 72, 74, 81, 84, 93, 94, 100
Pardo, El, 43, 44
Pareja, Adrian Pulido da, 60, 63
Pareja, Juan de, 68, 76, 77
Paul V., 16
Peñaranda, Count, 18
Perpignan, 58
Philip II., 7, 20-24, 81
Philip III., 16, 17, 24-26, 28, 58
Philip IV., 17-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 40, 43, 48, 56-59, 63, 71, 74, 81, 83, 84, 100
"Philip IV. on Horseback," 52
Philip V., 74
Pimentel, Don Antonio, 63
Pitti Palace, 52
Pontius, Paul, 31
Poussin, 40, 41, 73
Pozzo, Cavaliere del, 74
Prado Gallery, 16, 18, 27, 35, 40, 42, 52, 58, 65, 68, 83, 84, 86, 94
"Primo, El," 59, 90
Prosper, Don (The Infante), 86
Pyrenees, Treaty of the, 97

Quesnoy, François du, 73
Quevedo, Francisco de, 26, 60
Quirini, 81, 86 (note)

Raphael, 74
Ribera, Josef, 7, 16, 42, 73
Ribera, Maria Rosa, 73
Ribera, Pier Afan de, 6
Richelieu, 36, 47
Rinieri, Niccolò, 72
Rioja, Francisco de, 17, 26
Roelas, Juan de las, 8
Rokeby Hall, 94
Rome, 37, 38-42, 56, 63, 72, 73
Rosa, Salvator, 73, 74
Roussillon, 58
Rubens, 26, 31, 32, 52, 94

Saccheti, Cardinal, 38
"Saint John at Patmos," 16
Salamanca, 28
San Sebastian, 98
Santos, Fray Francisco de los, 81, 82
Saragossa, 54, 56, 58
Savile, Lord, 60, 67
Sera, Paolo del, 72
Serrano, 48
Seville, 5-18, 60, 68
Silva, Diego Rodriguez de, 10
Silva, Juan de, 10
Snayers, Pieter, 44
Spinola, Ambrogio, 37, 49, 50
"Spinners, The." *See* "Hilanderas, Las"
"Stag-Hunt, The," 47
Stevenson, Mr. R., 50
Stirling-Maxwell, 66
"Surrender of Breda, The." *See* "Lanzas, Las"
"Sybil, The," 65

Taylor, Baron, 16
Tacca, Pietro, 52, 60
Testi, 66
Tintoretto, 37, 72
Titian, 23, 24, 72, 94
Toledo, 20, 21, 63
Torre de la Parada, 43, 51, 52
Tristan, Luis, 12
Triunfi, Flaminia, 79

Uclès, 10
Uffizi, The, 52, 76
Urban VIII., 22, 38, 41, 63, 73

Vargas, Luis de, 8
Vatican, The, 38, 39
Vazquez, Alonzo, 8
Velazquez, "The Daughter of," 65
Velazquez, Diego Rodriguez de Silva y, his birth and family, 10; apprenticed to Herrera, 11; leaves Herrera for Pacheco, 11; marries Pacheco's daughter, 11; birth of his children, 17; first visit to Madrid, 18, 19; appointed court painter, and settles at Madrid, 21, 22; his first visit to Italy, 36; returns to Madrid, 42; goes with the king to the seat of war, 58; revisits Italy, 72; paints a portrait of the Pope, 76; returns to Madrid, 79; appointed Palace-Marshal, 80; superintends the royal progress connected with the marriage of the Infanta, 100; his last illness, 100; death, 102
"Velazquez, The Family of," 66
Velazquez, Francisca, 17, 65, 68
Velazquez, Geronima, 10
Velazquez, Ignacia, 17, 65
Venice, 37, 38, 72
"Venus and Adonis," 94
"Venus with the Mirror," 94
Veronese, Paolo, 72
Vienna Gallery, 56, 84, 88
Villegas, Pedro de, 8
Villamediana, Count, 21
Villareal, José da, 98

"Water-carrier, The," 12, 13
Wellington, Duke of, 14
Westminster, Duke of, 56
"Woman pursued by the Dragon, The," 16

Zuñiga, 28
Zurbaran, 16, 68

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# PART II

# *THE ART OF VELAZQUEZ*

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

## *PLATES*


PAGE

Don Balthazar Carlos. Museo del Prado . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Pablillos de Valladolid. Museo del Prado . . . . . 30

The Surrender of Breda. Museo del Prado . . . . . 56

St. Anthony visiting St. Paul . . . . . 86


## *ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT*


Adoration of the Magi. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Lithograph by C. Palmaretti . . . . . 19

Dead Warrior. National Gallery. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 27

Portrait of a Man. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . 29

Philip IV. (bust in armour). Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent . . . . . 31

Philip IV. (holding hat and glove). Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . 33

Los Borrachos (The Topers). Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 37

Maria, Queen of Hungary. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 43

The Crucifixion. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent 45

Queen Margarita. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . 47

Philip IV. dressed for the Chase. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . 49

PAGE

"Don Juan of Austria." Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 53

Figures from the Boar Hunt. National Gallery. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. 55

El Primo, a dwarf. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . . 57

El Bobo de Coria. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent . . . . . 59

Sebastian de Morra, a dwarf. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 61

El Niño de Vallecas. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent . . . . . 63

Don Antonio Alonso Pimentel. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 71

Mars. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . . 73

Venus. Rokeby Park, Yorkshire. From a Photograph by E. Yeoman . . 77

Portrait of the sculptor Martinez Montañes. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 79

Queen Mariana. Museo del Prado, Madrid. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . 81

Las Meniñas (The Maids of Honour). Museo del Prado. From a Photograph by J. Laurent . . . . . 83

The Infanta Margarita. Louvre. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 87

View of Saragossa. By Mazo-Martiñez. Museo del Prado. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . 90

Garden of the Villa Medici, Rome. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . 92

Garden of the Villa Medici, Rome. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . 93

Réunion de Gentilshommes. Louvre. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . . 95

Drawing of Horses. British Museum . . . . . 101

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

PAGE

"Don Juan of Austria." Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 53

Figures from the Boar Hunt. National Gallery. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. 55

El Primo, a dwarf. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . . 57

El Bobo de Coria. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent . . . . . 59

Sebastian de Morra, a dwarf. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . 61

El Niño de Vallecas. Museo del Prado. Madrid. From a Photograph by J.

## ERRATA.

Page 9, line 6 from bottom, *for* lightness *read* tightness.

Page 25, line 14 from bottom, *for* lighter *read* tighter.

graph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . 93

Réunion de Gentilshommes. Louvre. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E. . . . . 95

Drawing of Horses. British Museum . . . . . 101

UNIV. OF
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Don Balthazar Carlos.

# THE ART OF VELAZQUEZ

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

It may fairly be said that the kingship of painting is at present shared between Velazquez and Rembrandt. Among those who understand pictures, nine out of ten would call Velazquez the greatest painter, and Rembrandt the greatest artist in paint, the modern world has yet produced. Thirty years ago a very different though equally positive belief prevailed. At that time the world had been long agreed that the king of painters was Raphael, and spoke of his art in terms which would now be employed by few whose opinions are not at least a generation old. The change is generally put down to an improvement in taste, or at least to an advance in technical knowledge, both among artists themselves, and among those who, from the outside, seriously concern themselves with artistic matters. It would, perhaps, be more prudent merely to confess that ideals have followed their usual line of change, and that one half of the nineteenth century has adopted with renewed enthusiasm the dictum of Voltaire, that it matters not what you say, if you say it well. Art, at large, follows the same course of evolution as the knowledge of art in a man's brain. It starts by believing that you must have some great external objective before you can produce great work ; it goes on to perceive that no man can express more than he has within him, and that no art is so poor but that its methods alone afford a vehicle for the expression of the greatest personality. The masterpieces before which our fathers went down on their knees were triumphs of conception. They existed, or might well

have existed, in their creators' brains before a touch was put upon the canvas. The *Madonna di San Sisto* is a vision, seen first, and then elaborately realised. Its effect upon the spectator is a faint echo of what he might feel were he thus brought face to face with the Mother of God. Such a picture is complete as soon as it has taken final shape in the artist's mind. Technically, his task is rather not to spoil it than to add anything to it. It is dangerous to generalise on artistic matters, for art changes with every votary that comes to its shrine ; but, speaking broadly, we may say that the Italians, down to, and even beyond, the days of Raphael, imagined a goal beyond the powers of paint, and struggled as near it as they could ; while such art as that into which Velazquez was born takes the nearest theme, and builds a creation upon it by dint of consummate and expressive execution. This is in harmony with the inevitable evolution of art. There is no need to pit Italy against Spain, or rather against Velazquez. The one greatness does not exclude the other, and the lapse of a century between the earlier climax and the later had more to do with their difference than any real antagonism between the methods they employed.

I have used the phrase "such art as that into which Velazquez was born." Those who claim that the great Spaniard was a sort of modern, born before his time, and anticipating in his art the notions to which the world at large has only now arrived after a further two centuries of experience, may object to such a way of putting the case. And yet, if anything, it appears to me too weak. Not only had Velazquez precedents for everything he did, not only was his finest work anticipated, in intention, by many an inferior master, both in Italy and in his own native country, but he himself was rather slow than prompt to take example by the best of what had already been done. Like Rembrandt, he was the reverse of precocious. His earliest productions are both dull in themselves and founded upon dull examples. They are promising chiefly in the evidence they afford of a faculty for taking pains. It was not until just before his first visit to Italy that he awoke to the larger possibilities of the art he practised, or to the nature of his own gifts. Even then he hankered for a time after false gods, perpetrating the melodramatic San Placido *Crucifixion*, and such Guido-fed productions as the *Forge of Vulcan* and the *Christ at the Pillar*. Velazquez was always sincere

Even when he deliberately tried to rival some other master, he gave free play to his own personality, and so his imitations—for his *Coronation of the Virgin*, his *Crucifixion*, his *Mars*, his *Adoration of the Magi*, are little more—are never without dignity and interest. Essentially, however, none of these things—and with others like them they make up no small portion of his total production—differ in anything but the stronger personality behind them from much that was done in the Spain and Italy of the seventeenth century. Examined in the light by his later work, we see, of course, that their producer took his art very seriously indeed, and that from every figure he painted he learnt something to be used in the next. But, speaking generally, the first steps of Velazquez show that he, like other people, had to work long and hard before he mastered what his seniors had to tell him, and could go on to make his own great contribution to a structure which had been rising, more or less continuously, ever since the revival of learning.

The most difficult problem to be faced by the would-be critic of Velazquez is that of disentangling his own genuine creations from the copies, imitations, and more or less controlled replicas turned out by his pupils. Velazquez had almost as many scholars as Rembrandt. Several of these had the credit, during the master's lifetime, of repeating his work with such skill as to deceive good contemporary judges. One pupil, the master's son-in-law, Juan Bautista del Mazo-Martiñez, was an excellent painter. The pictures acknowledged as his in the Museo del Prado vary greatly in excellence, but some approach so closely to the master as to leave us in no kind of doubt that Mazo set posterity a very ticklish problem indeed when he repeated Velazquez. We must remember that the forty years covered by the master's career in Madrid were by no means devoted exclusively to painting. Four were spent in Italy, where he used his eyes more than his hands. The last eight were partly given up to the duties of the Aposentador Mayorship, which was very far from being a sinecure. Besides all this, Velazquez busied himself energetically as director of the royal collections, which kept him continually trotting backwards and forwards between Madrid and the Escorial.[1] All this time his *atelier* was going on. His pupils, according to the practice of every time but our own, were multiplying his works,

[1] See *Life of Velazquez* (*Portfolio* for July 1896), p. 81.

and painting those royal portraits which Philip sowed broad-cast over Europe to carry the name, at least, of his favourite into Austria, Italy, France, and England. But Mr. Curtis, in his Catalogue of the works of Velazquez and Murillo, enumerates three hundred pictures ascribed to the elder master in the various public and private collections of Europe and America. Against this total of three hundred it would be difficult to muster fifty left to his pupils. Outside Spain, I scarcely know a picture ascribed to Mazo. The National Gallery has a problematical copy with variations of the Prado *Don Antonio the Englishman*, and a worthless little picture was exhibited under his name last winter at the New Gallery. A few more can be found here and there, but even then, the ascription to Mazo is, in most cases, a pure guess, and the picture bearing it quite unlike the two thoroughly authenticated examples in the Prado Museum. Before these two pictures, one a portrait, the other a view of Saragossa from the opposite side of the Ebro, the conviction is irresistible that not only many pictures ascribed to Velazquez, but several of those on which his reputation rests most securely for those who have not visited Madrid, are in reality the work of his son-in-law. The question will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. As with Mazo, so with Juan de Pareja. The Moor lived in the house of Velazquez for thirty-seven years, and astonished his master's friends with the skill of his imitations. His ability was rewarded by the king, and made use of by Velazquez. During the ten years which elapsed between the discovery of his talent and his master's death, he did nothing but paint. Where are his pictures? The Prado Museum has one, in which the influence of what he saw during his attendance on Velazquez in Italy can be easily traced. Elsewhere his name scarcely occurs. Their fellow-pupils were inferior in ability to these two, but when at work under the master's eye, they may well have produced pictures now accepted as the handiwork of Velazquez himself.

The readiness to accept as genuine pictures which are both different from, and inferior to, the authentic works of the master is primarily due, of course, to mere lack of opportunities for acquiring a trustworthy knowledge of his art. In the first place, very few examples of any importance have left Spain at all. In collections north of the Pyrenees

we find a considerable array of good pictures bearing the master's name, but in the vast majority of cases their excellence is of a kind that cannot, by any ingenuity, be made to fit into that of the series in Madrid. To give an instance, the *Philip IV.* at Dulwich is a masterpiece of colour and design. In subtlety, says a competent French critic, it is equal to the finest Metzu. Such a comparison would scarcely suggest itself in the Museo del Prado. But there, whatever we miss, we invariably find the most consummate drawing and the most significant march of the brush, both of which are conspicuously absent from the Dulwich picture. The head, the hands, the sword-hilt, the lace—all these have been painted carefully and with the best intention, but the results are soft and nerveless.

In the absence of better things to go by, this picture and others like it have been accepted as genuine, and set up for students to copy. They have seemed worthy of the fame of the Spanish master, and so it has been taken for granted that they are by him. More especially has this been the fault of painters, who are too apt to ask themselves the question, "Is this good enough for so-and-so?" rather than, "Is the particular excellence we see here characteristic of so-and-so?" The laborious green pictures of Rembrandt's first time are certainly his, as no one who examines the master's work as a whole can doubt, but I have heard painters, and excellent painters too, flatly refuse to believe it.

The excuse for the mistaken idea—as I venture to think it—which is too often formed of Velazquez, is the inaccessibility of Madrid. Few people care to make a pilgrimage of twelve or thirteen hundred miles to the dullest metropolis in the world for the sake even of such a gallery as the Museo del Prado, and such an artist as he who painted the *Maids of Honour* and the *Surrender of Breda*. And yet, until you have spent days before the forty-eight or fifty standard pictures in Madrid, you can have no clear idea of the true range of Velazquez, or of the successive stages by which he advanced from the laborious "tightness" of his youth to the unrivalled freedom and mastery of his latest portraits. All this becomes easy enough in the Museo del Prado. A map, as it were, of the master's career is spread out before you. The path he followed is quite distinct, and you see that he made for his goal with as little deviation and uncertainty as a Mohawk. A few pictures ascribed to him, even at Madrid,

cannot be fitted into the chain of his development. These I shall venture, in the following pages, to reject, giving what seem to me sufficient reasons for so doing. With the help of the rest and those rare pictures outside Spain which seem to me authentic, I shall do my best to paint a true picture of Velazquez the artist, and to determine his share in the tradition which has grown up about his name.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MUSEO DEL PRADO

The brick and stone Museo del Prado, one of the few really architectural buildings of which Madrid can boast, may be said to have struggled into existence. It was begun as far back as the reign of Charles III. (1759-1788) by Juan de Villanueva, its object being to house a museum and academy of natural history. After the death of Charles, his successor slowly went on with the structure, but the soldiers of Napoleon caught it while still unfinished, and, after grievous misuse, left it little better than a ruin. Its chance came when Ferdinand VII., on his second marriage, revolutionised the interior of the Royal Palace, turning it into a sort of inferior Tuileries, and banishing the pictures which filled it to its less honourable parts. Some nobles of the Court devised a scheme for which the king afterwards obtained the credit. With the queen's sanction, they completed three rooms in the derelict *museo*, and there placed some three hundred and more of the royal pictures, among them many examples of Velazquez. This was in 1819. The experiment was successful, and so more rooms were finished and opened, until the whole building was at last completed, and devoted to a purpose not entirely foreign to that for which it had been designed. Though constructed of shabby materials, it has dignity, and would produce a more satisfactory effect than any other building in Madrid were it not for the trees with which a mistaken taste has masked its best façade.

As for its contents, these have been so persistently belauded that it requires some courage to confess to the feeling of disappointment which certainly affected me at my first visit, and did not afterwards entirely disappear. The collection is, of course, one of the most interesting in

the world. Its possession of nearly all the important works of Velazquez would make it so even if all the rest were rubbish. But to those who travel to Madrid in the hope of seeing forty-five Titians and fifty or sixty Rubenses of the first class, as well as a splendid array of Raphaels, and other prizes to the spears and bows, or rather the money-bags, of Charles V., Philip II., and Philip IV., the reality is slightly disconcerting. Most of the Titians are of his latest period, when he was but a fascinating shadow of his former self. The two great pictures of his early time, the *Bacchanal* and the *Sacrifice to Venus*, have been annihilated by the cleaner. The *Charles V. on the Field of Muhlberg* has suffered almost as much from fire and restoration. Few celebrated pictures are so disagreeable in their present condition as the *Spasimo di Sicilia*, while the little *Madonna*, which used to be so famous as *La Perla*, is a good design spoilt by the horrible colour of some incompetent pupil. The *Dürer, by himself* is a bad copy. The so-called Van Eyck, the *Triumph of the Church over the Synagogue*, which Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle chose for the frontispiece to their *History of Early Flemish Painting*, is, so far as execution goes, a harsh, leathery, sixteenth-century production, so unworthy of its ascription that its acceptance for so long, and by such high-sounding authorities, seems quite incomprehensible. The Giorgione has been flayed, so has the finest Rubens; while a perverse dexterity has been shown in bringing together a crowd of pictures by Teniers and the Dutchmen of the seventeenth century with scarcely a single thing among them that sticks in the memory. This is the reverse of the medal. On the other side we have the lovely little Mantegna, the *Cardinal* and *Virgen del Pez* of Raphael, to atone for the *Spasimo* and the *Perla*, Titian's standing *Charles V.*, and one of the best of Tintoretto's smaller works. To these we must add the fine series of Early Flemish pictures, the Moros, a Dürer, two great Vandycks, a few good examples of the French School, some notable and too-much-neglected Spagnolettos, a few hints at Goya, and the dazzling display of Velazquez.

The history of the collection repeats that of most of the great continental galleries. Charles V., Philip II., and Philip IV. were so placed in Europe that they might, had they understood their opportunities, have filled Madrid with the masterpieces of Italy and the Netherlands. As a fact, they did try to do something of the sort, and were imitated

in a feebler way by the Bourbon, Philip V. Most of the pictures now in the Museo were bought by those four kings, and hung in the various royal palaces and seats down to the year 1819. I have already explained how the gallery was housed. Ferdinand VII. afterwards increased it slightly by purchase, but the only important accessions since his death have been from the Escorial and from the disestablished *Museo Nacional*. This museum was formed between the years 1836 and 1840, under the supervision of Commissioners appointed by the Academy of San Fernando. Its home was the disused Convent of the Trinity, into which some three hundred pictures, drawn from various churches, monasteries, and convents in the provinces of Madrid, Toledo, Segovia, and Avila, were collected. All these were removed to the Prado in 1840. The most notorious picture so acquired was the *quasi* Van Eyck, the *Triumph of the Church over the Synagogue*, which came from the monastery *del Parral* at Segovia.

Considering that it was not originally designed for a picture gallery, the museum answers that purpose fairly well. One room, the *Sala de la Reina Isabel*, which has been turned into a kind of *salle d'honneur*, is really well lighted, and every picture it contains can be well seen. The central gallery, similar in its section to the great gallery of the Louvre, but narrower and only about one quarter as long, is well enough on very bright days, which, happily, are the rule at Madrid. But in cloudy weather it is very dark, and yet it contains the *Surrender of Breda*, the *Maids of Honour*, the *Mœnippus*, and many another first-rate Velazquez, as well as the equestrian portrait of *Charles V.* by Titian, Raphael's *Spasimo*, Tintoretto's *Baptism*, and not a few pictures besides which have to be carefully studied. Velazquez, again, is the presiding genius of a large side-lighted room divided into five compartments by screens, which opens out of the vestibule. Here, indeed, one of his very finest works, the little Don Balthazar Carlos on his pony, has been hung. As the freshest and most brilliant passage of colour ever achieved by the master, it ought surely to have been in a better place. Most of the Flemish Early Collection is in the basement, in the last rooms opened, although a few examples have been placed in the *Sala de la Reina Isabel*. The idea has clearly been to spread the better pictures pretty evenly over the whole building. The slight preference of the Sala just mentioned over

the rest is shown rather by excluding second-rate pictures from its walls than by crowding them with masterpieces. Personally, I should prefer to see this room called the Sala de Velazquez, and the whole of his pictures collected into it; and in this, I fancy, most foreign visitors would agree with me. But perhaps an even more desirable improvement would be to bring the illumination of the great gallery up to the level of this Sala. Both are lighted from the roof, so there could be no great difficulty in carrying out such an operation. Galleries which immediately communicate with each other should always be lighted equally. If not, the darker of the two will always be more or less depressing. The corner room in our National Gallery, where the Correggios hang at present, is light enough from a positive standpoint, but compared with the great Venetian Gallery it seems too dark, and its contents have an air of being banished. A feeling of the same kind makes itself felt as we pass from the Sala of Queen Isabella into the main gallery at Madrid.

I have ventured to say that all the pictures by Velazquez should be hung together. At present they are distributed over three galleries—the side-lighted room at the entrance, the great gallery, and the Hall of Queen Isabella. And in the distribution no regard whatever has been paid to chronological or any other sort of classification. Size and shape have been the determining factors, and in not a few cases inferior and doubtful pictures have been given the *pas* over their betters, simply because they fitted more neatly into the pattern. Such a method puts needless difficulties in the way of enjoyment. With painters like Velazquez and Rembrandt—between whom in some ways there is a curious and subtle affinity—the only way to arrive at a thorough knowledge of what they were and what they were not, which means what they did and what they did not do, is to establish every step of their progress, to trace the development of their ideas and the emancipation of their hands almost from day to day, so that at last you have a complete chain of evolution in which there is no room for a foreign link. By dint of years of hard work Dr. Bode has done this for Rembrandt, whose pictures are scattered all over the world. With Velazquez, of course, it is easier, as the materials are practically all under one roof. But it might have been much easier still, especially for those who are not blessed with Dr. Bode's memory, had the

Madrid authorities been a little kinder. The absence of such mechanical facilities must, to no small extent, bear the blame for the confused lines in which Velazquez's portrait has too often been drawn. Several pictures in the Prado would betray themselves at once, as being outside his line of advance, if they were hung beside his genuine works, while, as it is, they too often pass muster. In the case of nearly every great painter, the unity which marks each separate production is characteristic also of his work as a whole, so that, when his pictures are collected, the impression produced is scarcely less clear and definite than that resulting from the study of any single creation. This observation is truer, perhaps, of Rembrandt than Velazquez. The Spaniard had periods which were more obviously tentative than any in the career of the Dutchman; and yet, even in his case, the genuine works form a pattern on which any excrescence becomes gradually conspicuous to the patient inquirer.

There is another reason why every possible facility for comparison should be provided. In spite of his greatness, in spite of his almost unrivalled faculty for creation through technique, Velazquez is not so difficult to copy, even now, as many a lesser man. Even painters with individualities of their own have made decent copies of his work. I need only instance the reproduction of the *Meniñas* by John Philip, at Burlington House. His own pupils, painting in his own studio, with his own "palette," overlooked by his eye, and helped here and there with a touch of his own hand, may well have produced things which only the most searching comparison will discover to be not by the master himself. As a fact, I shall be able to show in the sequel that the chief groups in two well-known pictures, both generally accepted, by painters no less than by critics, as the actual handiwork of Velazquez, are identical with each other, *touch for touch*, so that one must be a slavish copy of the other or both of a third. No great original painter, certainly none who painted with the freedom of Velazquez, ever did, or could, repeat of himself in that fashion.

The method invented by Morelli, and applied by himself and his followers with more or less success to the works of the early Italians, would not be of much use in the case of Velazquez. At its best the system of comparing details of manner seems to me more fitted for the purpose of demonstration than for that of study. The critic who requires to look at the pattern of an ear before he can distinguish between a

Moretto and a Moroni has only half learnt his business, but such an easily-grasped piece of evidence has its value when the truth of conclusions arrived at on some more solid, though less generally perceptible, ground has to be demonstrated. Velazquez was endowed with so true an eye, and his interest in the look of things was so keen, that with him manner never takes the place of truthful interpretation. In his later and freer work we can, indeed, perceive a few personal tendencies in matters of form. Perhaps the most conspicuous of these is a fondness for plump hands with rather short, very tapering fingers. But this is due not so much to a lapse of observation as to his system of handling. We must search in his technique, as a whole, for his true distinctive marks, and reinforce our conclusions by a true vision of the man behind that technique, to which an examination of his methods of conception will help us.

Here, perhaps, it may be as well that I should explain what I mean by technique. In his careful study of the art of Velazquez, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson spreads the meaning of the term over practically the whole of a painter's activity. He includes in it everything done between the first inception of a picture and the last touch put upon the canvas. This appears to me both inconvenient and misleading. It is inconvenient, because it substitutes a vague for a perfectly definite term ; it is misleading, because it implies an identity of character between processes which are, as a fact, different. Conceiving a picture and realising a picture are different things, depending upon different personal endowments, which are capable of being divorced from each other. The fact that, in conceiving a picture, an artist has to keep technical possibilities in view, does not justify us in confusing, or, if you like, blending the two things. Take an illustration from a minor art. An architect designs a grille to be carried out in hammered iron. If he knows his business he keeps the technique of forging iron constantly in his mind as he combines his curves and decides upon his forms. A good result is arrived at through his art and knowledge of technical requirements and the practical technique of the forger. In the case of painting both processes are carried out by one man, but that does not make them identical in kind. By technique, then, I shall mean everything *done on the canvas*, as distinct from such matters as have to be decided before the canvas is touched. The distinction is a little difficult to keep up, I grant, because technique continually reacts on conception

and *vice versâ*, but nevertheless it has to be done if we are to arrive at clear ideas.

Some of those—and I hope there may be some!—who read these pages may feel inclined to cry *cui bono?* when they come upon all this discussion as to how the actual hand of Velazquez is to be recognised. Velazquez, they may say, created the fashion in art of which his pupils were exponents as well as himself. Lump them all together, and study them as the exemplars on which the most efficient painting of our own day is based. To do so would be to abandon the most fascinating, as well as the most useful, function of the critic. The seed of art is sincerity. Without sincerity, without the sincere expression of really felt emotion, art is nothing but artifice, and those who practise it are not causes, but effects. In his beginning Velazquez got afloat on a stream which had been flowing for centuries, but the time came when he determined its channel. His pupils floated on by his side, but they determined nothing; and to make no attempt to distinguish their work from his, would only be to weaken our impressions and confuse our conclusions. We must learn our Velazquez in his own confessions, and when we have done so I think we shall find that, in some ways, he is not truly presented in Cis-Pyrenean tradition.

## CHAPTER III

### CHRONOLOGY OF VELAZQUEZ'S PICTURES

The chronology of Velazquez is by no means easy to establish. The dates of a certain number of his pictures can be fixed with more or less confidence, but for various reasons it is not safe to depend upon matters which would be considered decisive in the case of most painters. It seems, for instance, to have been his habit to work upon pictures which had long been finished. There is reason to believe, too, that some of the royal portraits represent their originals, not as they were at the time of sitting, but as they had once been. In spite of this, however, a few fixed points can be set up, which we must try to supplement by the internal evidence of style. The earliest works we know are the fairly numerous *bodegones* and kindred pictures, of which by far the finest is the Duke of Wellington's *Aguador*. These seem, for the most part, to have been painted in his first youth, as, from the unerring evidence of technical completeness, they are inferior to the *Adoration of the Kings* at Madrid, still more to the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the National Gallery. And yet the Madrid picture is dated 1619, when the master was only twenty, and the probability is that the *Adoration* in Trafalgar Square was painted immediately after it. We may, then, take the *Aguador* and the two *Adorations* as the typical works of his youth, before the influence of Seville had encountered a rival. It is possible, of course, that the *Adoration of the Shepherds* was painted somewhat later, and that its decided superiority represents more than a few months of added experience. It seems quite certain, however, that it holds a place about midway between the *Aguador* and the bust portrait of Philip IV. (Prado, No. 1071), which we may give to the year 1623 with some confidence.

*Adoration of the Magi. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Lithograph by C. Palmareti.*

To about the same time belong the standing portrait of the king (Prado, No. 1070), and the full-length of Olivares at Dorchester House. Accepting these dates, then, we may thus arrange the fruits of Velazquez's first period of activity, confining ourselves to such pictures as we may have further cause to mention.

Between 1615 and the autumn of 1623:—

Old Woman cooking Eggs (Sir F. Cook).
Christ in the House of Lazarus (National Gallery), *a bodegone*; the title is misleading.
Two Young Men at a Meal (Apsley House).
The Aguador (Apsley House).
The Epiphany, or Adoration of the Kings (Museo del Prado).
The Adoration of the Shepherds (National Gallery).
*Bust portrait of Philip IV. (Museo del Prado; costume added, or repainted, later).

[It is known that Philip carried out his promise to sit to the young Sevillian on August 30, 1623. The result was the life-size equestrian portrait which was afterwards exhibited to the public in the Calle Mayor before it was hung in the Alcazar. In 1686 it was removed, and has now disappeared. It was probably burnt in the fire of 1734. The bust above mentioned may have been the study for it. The king most likely was content to sit for the head, to which Velazquez may well have added in later years the freely painted armour which now completes the picture.]

*Full-length portrait of Olivares (Dorchester House).
Bust portrait of a man (Museo del Prado).
*Full-length portrait of Philip IV. (Museo del Prado, No. 1070).
Pablillos de Valladolid (Museo del Prado).

All of these belong to the first, laborious time of Velazquez. They show that composition still had insurmountable difficulties for him, that "handling" had scarcely begun, and that such colour as he commanded was suggested by the examples he had had before him at Seville. During the next three or four years he must have made rapid progress, but it is not easy to determine the pictures which belong to them. Probably the original of the full-length *Philip IV.* in the National Gallery was one. This picture, which came to Trafalgar Square from Hamilton Palace, cannot, I think, be accepted as entirely the work of Velazquez. It appears to me a repetition by Mazo, which has been worked on by the master. However, that question need not detain us at present. Just now I wish to establish a list which may be the ground-work for dis-

cussion, and I find it difficult to select examples within my own knowledge for these particular years. Such gaps occur here and there with Velazquez, and the usual explanation, the burning of the Alcazar, is probably the true one. When we get to 1628 we are on firmer ground. That was the year Rubens came to Madrid, and when we find that Velazquez received the price of a *Bacchus* from the king in July 1629, we are confirmed in our belief that the *Borrachos* should come in here. Philip IV. was not a prompt paymaster, but his readiness on this occasion is to be accounted for, perhaps, by the artist's preparations for his first tour in Italy. Rubens had affected the aims, though not the manner, of his art. In Italy, men so opposed, and, in our eyes, so inferior to the Fleming as Poussin, Guido, and the Carracci, exercised a still deeper influence. The *Forge of Vulcan* was painted in Rome, and its inspiration is unmistakable. Between 1628 and 1635 I should place the following pictures :—

¶Los Borrachos, 1628-29 (Museo del Prado).
*Forge of Vulcan, 1630 (Museo del Prado).
*Joseph's Coat, 1630 (Escorial).
¶Christ at the Pillar (National Gallery).
*Portrait of Don Balthazar Carlos with another child, 1631 (Earl of Carlisle).
Crucifixion (Museo del Prado).

[Justi thinks this picture probably dates from 1638, basing his opinion on the fact that the Convent of San Placido, for which it was painted, was reinstated in its honours in that year. In style, however, it suggests an earlier date, when the master had been more recently under the influence of the painters collected in Rome.]

*Full-length portrait of Philip IV. in hunting dress, about 1635 (Museo del Prado).
*Full-length portrait of Don Fernando in hunting dress, 1635 (Museo del Prado).
*Full-length portrait of Don Balthazar Carlos in hunting dress, 1635 (Museo del Prado).

[These three pictures bear signs of having been worked upon again at some later period in the master's career.]

This list shows a surprising variety of manner, but the dates of the *Forge*, the *Joseph's Coat*, and the three hunting pieces are certainly known, and yet they embrace the extremes of difference. Here, however, the master's violent oscillations practically come to an end. With the exception of a few things painted after his second visit to Italy, the rest of his work flows on like a river, the starting-point, I think, being the great

group of equestrian portraits which head the list of pictures painted between 1635 and 1640 :—

*Equestrian portrait of Olivares (Museo del Prado).
*Equestrian portrait of Philip IV. (Museo del Prado).
*Equestrian portrait of Queen Isabel de Bourbon (Museo del Prado).
*Equestrian portrait of Don Balthazar Carlos (Museo del Prado).
*Full-length standing portrait of Don Balthazar Carlos (Buckingham Palace).
*Full-length standing portrait of Don Balthazar Carlos (Vienna).
*Surrender of Breda (Museo del Prado).
*Portrait of Admiral Pulido da Pareja, painted in 1639 (National Gallery).
Pernia (Museo del Prado).
Don Juan of Austria (Museo del Prado).
El Niño de Vallecas (Museo del Prado).
El Bobo de Coria (Museo del Prado).
El Primo (Museo del Prado).
Don Sebastian de Morra (Museo del Prado).
Æsop (Museo del Prado).
Mœnippus (Museo del Prado).

In 1649 came the painter's second tour in Italy, and to the months immediately after his return I feel tempted to ascribe the second group of pictures in which Italian influence is conspicuous. The list for the years between 1649 and the end of his life would then be in something like the following order :—

Juan de Pareja (Earl of Carlisle).
*Innocent X. (Apsley House).
*Innocent X. (Doria-Pamfili Palace, Rome).
¶Coronation of the Virgin (Museo del Prado).
Venus (Rokeby Hall).
¶Mars (Museo del Prado).
*Infanta Margarita (Vienna Gallery, No. 619).
*Infanta Margarita (Louvre).
*Las Meniñas (Museo del Prado).
¶Martinez Montañes (Museo del Prado).
*Queen Mariana (Museo del Prado).
*Infanta Margarita (Museo del Prado).
The Tapestry Weavers (Museo del Prado).
*Infanta Margarita (Vienna Gallery, No. 615).
*Infante Prosper (Vienna Gallery, No. 621).
[These two were painted and sent to Vienna in 1659.]
Mercury and Argus (Museo del Prado).
*Philip IV. in old age (National Gallery).
Visit of St. Anthony Abbot to St. Paul (Museo del Prado).

This list, which contains fifty-two pictures, is confined, with one exception, to works which seem to me indubitably by the hand of Velazquez himself. The dates of those to which an asterisk is prefixed are approximately known, either by external evidence, or, in the case of a portrait, by the apparent age of the sitter. Others indicated by a ¶ may be dated with some confidence through the marks they bear of various influences. Around these the rest are arranged according to affinities of style. The list is not a very long one, and yet I fancy it includes nearly one half of all the existing works of Velazquez. Rather more than a hundred pictures is not a great total for a master who painted with facility, and who was at work for forty years. But we must remember the destruction wrought by the burning of the Alcazar in 1734; and also that for many years of his life Velazquez had duties to attend to which kept him away from his studio. In any case, it is mainly upon the pictures above enumerated that I have to ground the following attempt to sketch his artistic personality.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EARLY WORK OF VELAZQUEZ

We saw in the biographical section of this study that the youthful Velazquez had two very different men for his teachers—the fiery, free, and impulsive Herrera, and the tame, methodical Pacheco. One of the puzzling things about the master's development is, that in his beginnings he took after Pacheco, to return in his maturity to the bolder methods of Herrera. There is much in the latter's existing productions to remind us of the *Surrender of Breda*, and even of the series of dwarfs and buffoons. Pacheco, on the other hand, is clearly responsible for the clumsy design and the tame smoothness of execution we see in the *bodegones*. So far as I know, only one other instance of a similar vacillation is to be found in the history of art. Albert Cuijp appears to have deserted a free for a tighter and more laborious manner, returning afterwards to his first style and basing his final development upon it. The first efforts of Velazquez, the work he did or may have done in the studio of Herrera, are not now to be traced. They were probably of very slight merit—he was not a quick beginner—and may all have been destroyed as soon as finished. It is unlikely, however, that they resembled the dull, plodding productions he turned out while under the wing of Pacheco; and even if he only stayed twelve months with Herrera, as Justi supposes, the absence of all positive witness to the way in which he spent his time may be lamented. The Velazquez we know begins with the *bodegones*, with one or two heads in the Prado, and with the *Aguador* at Apsley House. What do these pictures tell us of his personality?

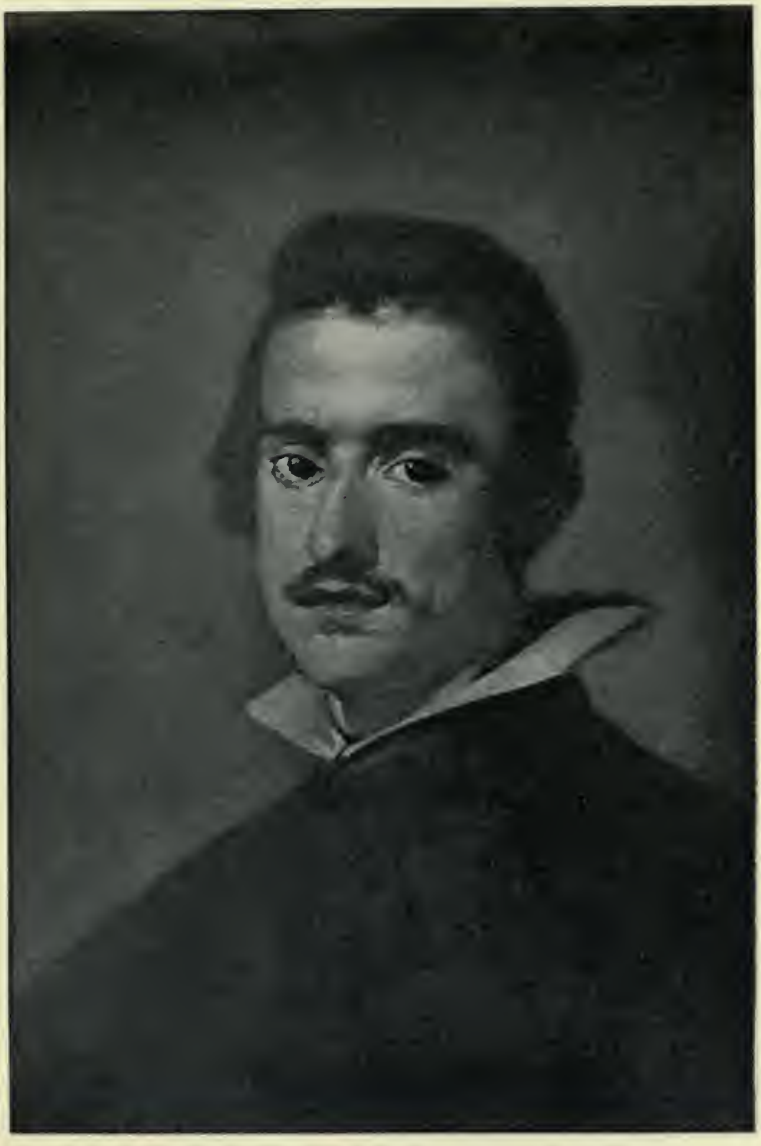
The first thing to strike us about them is a curious contradiction in the witness they bear to their author's originality. It required unusual inde-

pendence to paint such subjects at all in the Spain of the early seventeenth century. The severity with which art was restricted to religious subjects has, no doubt, been exaggerated. The Inquisition must have either been less omnipotent or more liberal in its ideas than its enemies assert. Otherwise the public corridors of the Alcazar could never have been hung with such pictures as many of the Titians collected by Charles V. and Philip II. A censorship which tolerated the *Danaë* could hardly have done much to narrow the bounds of art! But if such subjects as the Dutch were to set permanently on a higher plane in this very century were not positively tabooed, they were certainly not encouraged. The most certain road to success was not in their direction, and a painter chose it at his peril. In later years, when Velazquez had shown the way, Murillo walked in his footsteps, but earlier masters, such as Juanes, March, Morales, Navarrete, Orrente, Pantoja de la Cruz, Ribalta, Ribera, Sanchez Coello, Zurbaran, and Pacheco himself, were very seldom tempted off the well-worn triple path of religion, history, and portraiture. The choice, then, of Velazquez argues courage, and the kind of originality which lies in a readiness to differ.

Strangely enough, the young painter's independence stops here. In the early work of Rembrandt there is not much art, in the strict sense of that word, but there is always something beyond the mere impulse towards imitation. In his single heads we find an endeavour to get dramatic if not pictorial unity by the management of the lighting; in his more complex creations the same quality is won by some daring piece of design, such as the drapery of Persephone in the little picture at Berlin. In Velazquez you find nothing of the kind. His originality seems to exhaust itself in choice of a subject. To realisation he seems to bring a lethargic mind and an almost stupid content with the first form which presents itself; even such a picture as the *Aguador*, superior as it is to the rest of its class, has the effect rather of a study, painted ploddingly by a South Kensington student, than of a picture born of a pictorial idea. This dulness and want of initiative seem to have marked the painter's imagination for an unusually long period. The early portraits at Madrid show but little advance upon the best of the *bodegones* and none at all upon the *Aguador*. Their success with Olivares and the king seems to have been due mainly to the formidable likeness which was never beyond the

*Dead Warrior. National Gallery. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

painter's reach. Philip, who was familiar with the *Charles the Fifth's* and



*Portrait of a Man. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

*Philip the Second's* of Titian, cannot have been so blind as to think the first attempts of Velazquez on his own royal physiognomy were great works

of art. The best of these, perhaps, is the full-length which is numbered 1070 at the Prado. Strange in drawing and conventional in arrangement, it produces its effect by a forcible and consistent illumination, and by the evident sincerity which has governed every touch of the brush. But it has no reality. It is the result, not of free observation, but of a process which gives not echoes, but symbols, of what is. Still we glean from it some presage of the vitality Velazquez was afterwards to breathe into every detail of his work. We can scarcely say this of the *Olivares*, or of the bust portrait of Philip. The bust, or rather head—for all below the throat is an after-thought—is thoroughly modelled from the student point of view, but the most promising thing about it is its sincerity. As for the *Olivares*, it is an imposing silhouette, the map of a man with no "tactile values," to use Mr. Berenson's new phrase in what, I hope, is its right sense.

It is curious that in these first mutterings of the genius of Velazquez the quality most conspicuously absent is that on which his fame, with painters, now securely rests. His youthful eye seems to have passed unseeingly over the actual relations of one plane with another. His portraits are apt to look as though he had posed his sitters between himself and the light, and had then proceeded to divine what he could not see. His subject pictures, on the other hand, are lighted from the front, but, as if he despaired of any real depth, he nearly always sets his figures against an impenetrable shadow. The eye which was afterwards to make possible such a *tour de force* as the *Tapestry Weavers*, either did not appreciate the relations of one surface to another, or, in conscious reserve, its owner postponed all attack upon such a difficulty till experience should have grown to meet it. Here again I feel tempted to contrast him with Rembrandt. In his early work the Dutchman betrays the tendencies which were to distinguish him to the end. Take, for example, the head of himself at Cassell, in which he has bathed the whole upper half of the face in unaccountable shadow. The endeavour is to win effect by the strongest use of light and shade. The result is dramatic rather than pictorial, suggestive rather than self-explanatory. As time went on and Rembrandt developed into an artist, he grew into the understanding that to the painter *chiaroscuro* should be a vehicle for the expression of pictorial emotion, not of a mental conceit. But even from the beginning, even from

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*Pablillos de Valladolid.*

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that feeble little picture in the Gallery at Stuttgart, which he painted at the age of twenty, we can trace the preoccupation on which his art was to be strung, as on a thread. It is less so with Velazquez. Rembrandt was

*Philip IV. (bust in armour). Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurens.*

a great solitary genius, spinning his message out of his own vitals. Velazquez depended more on others; he required a hint, a lead, before he recognised his own road. I do not wish to minimise his individuality, but simply to show how much more it depended on external stimulants

for its development than is usually supposed. Velazquez did not dream, he observed, and his observation led to much only when something entirely sympathetic came under his eye. He praised Titian in words, but he denied him the sincerest form of flattery. The Venetian was probably the first great master with whose work he was familiar. After seeing him at home in Venice, he called him the first of Italians; and yet his own art seems to have remained almost unaffected. The influence upon him of several second-rate Italians can be traced, but, so far as we can judge, he may never have pondered before the Titians collected by Charles V. and Philip II. at all.

The practical worship refused to Titian was bestowed upon Rubens. The visit of Sir Peter Paul to Madrid took place in 1628, and in that year, according to my reading of the evidence, the *Borrachos* was begun. Too much stress has sometimes been laid on the influence of the Antwerp master in modifying the technique of his Spanish friend. I can see nothing in the execution of the *Borrachos* which would not have been there had Velazquez never seen Rubens. The influence of the Fleming is to be traced in the conception, in the sudden expansion of the Spaniard's ideas, in the sudden increase of his courage and confidence in his own powers. Down to 1628 he had been timid, imitative, sincere; his imagination had been dormant, and his eyes had been restrained from looking out on the wider possibilities of art. The sudden change may be referred, with very great probability, to the personal influence, the conversation and companionship of Rubens. An artist whose strength lies rather in observation than in imagination can be easily influenced for his good. Rubens had only to say to his companion, "You can paint anything; don't be content with dull kings in black coats, but paint that—or that," and the obedient Velazquez would find himself out at once. We know that the two painters were frequent companions during the autumn of 1628, and so there is nothing fanciful in this guess at the methods by which the elder influenced the younger. In any case, the picture known now as *Los Borrachos*, which appears once to have been called simply a *Bacchus*, coincides with the presence of Rubens, and marks the first emancipation of Velazquez from the timidity of his youth.

Velazquez, then, as he appears in his early work, was a painter in whom it required the experience of a Rubens to discern the germs of future

*Philip IV. (holding hat and glove). Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

greatness. His strong points were independence in selecting his line and quiet sincerity in its prosecution. With our modern facilities for comparison we know that such qualities as these, when combined with industry and intelligence, have always led to success, but I doubt whether, had Velazquez died before he painted the *Borrachos*, the most acute among us would have recognised that a career of promise had been brought to an untimely end. He would have been ranked with the Coellos and Alonzo Canos, if not lower, and the beauties which are laboriously disinterred from his *bodegones* and early portraits would have remained hidden.

According to my view, then, the second period of Velazquez begins with his visit to Italy in 1629, but its possibilities are first hinted at in the last important work he created before he left home. In colour, handling, and some other qualities, the *Topers* belongs to the same phase of his art as the early portraits of Philip and Olivares, but in conception it betrays that awakening of the painter's fancy and ambition which I have ventured to put down to his friendship with Rubens. Let us look at it a little more closely.

In nearly all the early pictures of Velazquez we find a curious preoccupation with contour. This tendency reappears now and again in his later pictures, and may even be traced in some of his freest work. But it forms an important feature in the technique of his first ten years. It is visible in the picture of a dead warrior (see p. 27), called the *Dead Orlando*, of the National Gallery, which I am inclined to think is a real Velazquez of his early period ; it is also conspicuous in the full-length of Pablillos de Valladolid (see Plate II.),—which for that and other reasons I venture to think earlier than the date usually given,—while in the portrait of Olivares at Dorchester House it forms the chief element of effect. The painter elaborates the boundary of a figure with as much care as if he were cutting one of those old-fashioned black silhouettes. Look at the use made of the bow at the knee and of the ends of the cloak in the *Pablillos*, or at the contour down the king's left side in the full-length of Philip IV. (p. 33); then turn to our reproduction of the *Topers*, and observe the way in which all the dark masses finish on the lights in elaborately designed edges. In after-years, when the mystery of half-seen things became an attraction to the master, he veiled this pro-

pensity and would lose an edge as bravely as the most famous of his modern disciples, but the intricate run of a contour never entirely lost its fascination for him. We can trace it even in the *Tapestry Weavers*, and in such a splendidly mysterious page as that *Mercury and Argus* (see *Portfolio* for July, p. 97), which was probably one of the last things he did. But there is all the difference between leaning on such a playful preference and embroidering it, as it were, on creations depending on subtler qualities for their value. In his earlier years, a very large proportion of the thought and consideration he gave to his designs must have been expended on these contours. In the *Topers* the line of heads and arms against the sky is so variously and curiously rhythmical as to suggest a separate act of design for the run of that line alone. Note, too, the way in which the silhouette of the crouching man in the right-hand corner—on the spectator's left—plays upon the lighter mass against which he is relieved. The rest of the contours are governed by the same preoccupation, and help to show that the picture is rightly placed at the end of Velazquez's first period of development.

Evidence of a different kind is afforded by the colour. Titians abounded at Madrid. Il Greco had died at Toledo, in extreme old age, three years before the *Topers* was painted, and so his message was at hand to profit by. Even Ribera, with whose work Velazquez had been familiar from a boy, was sometimes good in colour. But until he went to Italy, Velazquez seems never to have realised what the palette could do. Taking it all round, perhaps, he never reached better colour in his youth than in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* of the National Gallery. In the *Topers* colour is used much as it is on a map. Purple browns have a few points of relief in cold crimson and other positive tints, but the whole scheme is without either unity or decorative organisation. Tint is an element he plays with, just as he plays with arabesque, but as yet he cannot use it for expression.

The picture contains nine figures or parts of figures. Each of these is well designed, well drawn, and strongly modelled ; their heads are characteristic, expressive, and vital, and their movements well understood. But they are not parts of an organic whole. The pictorial bond between them is artificial and by no means inevitable, and the general result leaves no vivid impression on the senses.

*Los Borrachos* (*The Topers*). *Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

It comes at last, then, to this, that the *Topers* is not by any means a great work of art, but is interesting as showing what Velazquez could do, under an impulse received from without, with such equipment as he possessed at the age of about twenty-eight. It displays an awakened ambition and an amount of technical mastery which only required to be turned into the right channel to do great work.

## CHAPTER V

### SECOND PERIOD, FROM 1629 TO 1649

On July 22, 1829, Velazquez received 400 ducats from the king, 100 being in payment of a *Bacchus*—the *Borrachos* or *Topers*—and three weeks afterwards he sailed for Genoa. By the end of August he was in Venice, where he copied Tintoretto and belauded Titian. It seems to me clear from his later work that his interest was more keenly aroused by the former than by the latter. In Tintoretto he would see much to remind him of his first master, and to bring conviction to his mind that, after all, Herrera was more of a painter than Pacheco. But for the moment the lesson seems to have borne little fruit. He passed on to Rome, making on the way a short pause at Bologna. The accounts of how he spent his time in the Eternal City are somewhat confused. We are now told that he was begging for permission to draw after Raphael, now that he could see nothing in that master's work. Cean Bermudez says he gave commissions on behalf of Philip to a dozen painters, including Guido, Guercino, Domenichino, and Sandrart. All this would seem to prove that he became a little *désorienté* among so many new claimants for his admiration. It is safer, perhaps, to put all these statements aside and to trust to what we know of his actual doings to arrive at a true idea of the impression made upon him by Italy.

In Rome he painted two important pictures for his master, the king. These were *Joseph's Coat* at the Escorial, and the *Forge of Vulcan* in the Museo del Prado. They are pendants to each other, and both belong to the same phase of his art.

Nicholas Poussin and Guido were both in Rome during the visit of Velazquez. In both the Spanish master would see qualities akin to those

we find in his own works down to this time. In the last chapter we saw how, preoccupied with contour, he would find an echo of the same preoccupation in both the Frenchman and the Bolognese. He had been content with brown tones and colour which looks rather afraid of itself. In Guido and Poussin he would find his own system carried out with less skill, indeed, but with an added boldness which he may have found suggestive. We need, therefore, feel no great surprise that he was so far attracted by their work that he painted two important pictures in which their influence is undeniable. It is, perhaps, carrying analysis too far to attempt to apportion their shares in the conception and execution of the *Forge of Vulcan*. One may, however, fairly ascribe its airy silveriness of tone and general freedom from heaviness of any sort to Guido, just as surely as its general conception, and especially the uses made of the nude, must be referred to Poussin.[1] The design of the *Forge* is not so well considered as that of the *Topers*. The five chief figures, *en queue*, are too independent of each other, while the little man in the background is perched uncomfortably on the head of the brawny "striker" in front. The figure of Mercury shows the barrenness which was apt to fall upon the painter's imagination when it approached the ideal. His only notion of suggesting the messenger of the gods was to provide him with a halo and a wreath of bay, just as he distinguished Vulcan from his hammermen by nothing but the ill-hung body of a lame man and the crutch propped against the wall behind him. The picture is a first-rate academic exercise, in which the painter experiments with ideas foreign to his own individuality. His success, up to a certain point, cannot be denied, for he has excelled both his exemplars on their own ground. But the picture leaves us quite cold. It displays intelligence, skill, and a certain amount of taste, but neither conviction nor the unity to which conviction leads.

The other two pictures painted during this sojourn in Italy are not now to be identified with any confidence. Some would like to see in the portrait now hanging in the Gallery of the Capitol, at Rome, the head of Velazquez himself mentioned by Pacheco, while the second picture is supposed to be identical with the not very remarkable bust of

[1] In the companion picture, the *Joseph's Coat*, the arrangement of the scene and of the figures which people it recall that master even more strongly.

Doña Maria, Queen of Hungary and sister of Philip IV., which is No. 1072 in the Museo del Prado. The claims of the *Doña Maria* at Berlin have also been put forward, but for various reasons it can scarcely be the picture painted at Naples.

But if we have no more pictures actually painted during this visit to Italy we can point out two which, so far as their methods go, depend immediately upon what he saw there. These are the *Crucifixion* at Madrid, and the *Christ at the Pillar* of the National Gallery. Justi contends that the *Crucifixion* was painted as late as 1638, when the Convent of San Placido swam anew into the current of prosperity. As to the *Christ at the Pillar* we must rely upon internal evidence, which seems to point to a time not far removed from the return of Velazquez to Spain. Putting chronology aside, it will be convenient to dwell upon these two pictures here, for they incontestably belong to the class of things inspired by Rome.

The *Crucifixion* has found enthusiastic admirers, and yet, perhaps, it shows the defects of Velazquez more convincingly than any other of his works. Its conception begins with a note of realistic tragedy, which it then allows to die away. The head, with its veil of blood-matted hair, scarcely hangs like the head of a corpse, but its intention is evident. The painter appeals not only to the spiritual love of the faithful, but also to their physical sympathies with suffering. But he fails to make the most of his own idea. The figure is splendidly realised, but it is not the figure of a man who has died in agony. It has clearly been painted from a living model standing on his feet, and the idea governing the arrangement of the head has evaporated before the actual interest excited by the interpretation of living flesh. The notion of painting the dead Christ as He hung strained and torn upon the Cross is suggested, but not carried out, and we have a conception at war with itself, in which the poignancy of one part finds no echo in the rest.

The picture presented to the National Gallery by Lord Savile (*Portfolio* for July, p. 67) is a much finer thing. Its aim, perhaps, is not so high, but it lives up to its aim. "My glass is small, but I drink out of my glass." The climax of the tragedy has not yet been reached, but the pity of its preparation is there, and the whole conception vibrates with a sensation of the agony to come. Of all the

creations of Velazquez this alone seems to me to suggest a high order of imagination. A touch of effeminacy in its pathos is not out of place when we remember that the suffering it presents is in memory

*Maria, Queen of Hungary. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

and anticipation rather than in instant pain. The moment is one of comparative rest. The child with his guardian angel suggests an appeal to the future not to let such pains be undergone in vain. This picture has scarcely won the admiration it deserves. Of all the religious

pictures of our painter, I might say of all the religious pictures of the Spanish School, it is incomparably the finest. It is, moreover, the one thing, with the possible exception of the *Mercury and Argus*, which makes us pause a moment before denying to Velazquez the faculty of free imagination. Outside these two pictures an unrivalled eye will explain everything he did. Here alone he drew upon a well of intellectual invention, and found the spring full and generous.

The history of *Christ at the Pillar* is unknown. It was bought in Madrid about fifty years ago, and was first exhibited at Manchester in 1857. These facts, coupled with the rarity of pictures in this particular style outside Madrid, induced some to question its authenticity when it was first hung in the National Collection. To those who are familiar with the *Forge of Vulcan*, the *Joseph's Coat*, the *Crucifixion*, and other things affected by Italian examples, no doubt is possible.

The conscious outcome of his Italian tour is contained in these few pictures. The more spontaneous changes it brought about in his art have to be looked for in a long series of portraits, mostly of the king and his family, which will bring us to about the year 1638, in which he probably painted the *Surrender of Breda*, to be immediately followed by that full-length of Admiral Pulido-Pareja which bears so close an affinity to it.

The earliest in this series of pictures is one of the heaviest and most laboured of his productions, I mean the group of the Infante Don Balthazar Carlos with a page, or companion, now in the possession of Lord Carlisle. The little prince is about two years old, so the picture must date from 1631. The hand of Velazquez is unmistakable over most of the canvas, but some stolid drapery-man, perhaps at a later date, has covered the boy's pelisse with embroidery. The heaviness which here marks even the share of Velazquez may be owing to the difficulties inseparable from painting two small infants before they have learnt to be still. Frequent changes lead to heavy impasto and that to opacity. But in spite of this, the execution has a freedom not to be found in his work before 1629. The figure of the page, especially, is broadly handled, true in movement and full of vitality. Four years later, in 1635, the Infante again sat to Velazquez. This time he figures as a little sportsman, with his dogs and his possibly inoffensive gun. The picture is one of a series of three, the other two being the full-lengths of the king and his brother

Don Fernando. They were painted for a room in the Torre de la Parada, and are therefore as similar in tone and treatment generally as the painter

*The Crucifixion. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurent.*

could make them. It is possible that the *Don Fernando* was painted first, as that prince left Madrid to take up his post as Regent of the Netherlands

in 1632 ; but, on the other hand, Velazquez may have used a study or a previous portrait, and all three pictures look as if they were painted with no long intervals between. Deductions from their appearance must be drawn, however, with some caution, as all three bear marks of having been worked over again at a later period. The hounds, especially, recall the manner of about 1645. All three pictures are distinguished by great simplicity of arrangement, sobriety of colour, and a breadth and directness of handling not previously attained to. They are remarkable, too, for their dogs. Don Balthazar has two, the king and Don Fernando one each. These dogs are marvellous, and give an extraordinary proof of Velazquez's facility. They are the first he painted, and yet no professed animal-painter has ever equalled them, so truly built are their frames, so loose and tactile is their skin, so subtle and just are their indications of mood and character. The sober colour scheme of these three pictures, with their browns, buffs, blacks, and silvery greys, was perhaps suggested by the tones of the room into which they were to be permanently set. But it was not characteristic of the master's work at the time, and may possibly be partly due to repainting already alluded to.

The five years which end with about 1640 saw the creation of the four great equestrian portraits in the Prado. Here, again, Olivares seems to have acted as taster to the king ; at least his picture has a tentative look in parts which is changed for assurance in Philip's portrait. The Count-Duke's horse is not altogether a success. Its movement lacks life, and its perspective is so exaggerated that the head and neck look absurd beside the huge bulk of Olivares. All this is corrected with the king, whose heavy charger is superb. Here, too, the colour is more luminous and the design better suited to the space. The *Queen Isabella* is reduced to secondary importance through the amount of surface occupied by the elaborate dress and saddle-cloth, which are not by Velazquez ; but the little we see of her white horse is magnificent.

Finest of the four is the *Don Balthazar Carlos* (*Portfolio* for July, Plate III.), which I also take to be the latest in date. Never in his whole career did Velazquez equal this picture in spontaneous vitality or in splendour of colour. The design, too, has a freshness and felicity which we miss from the *Olivares*, and, to a less extent, from the *Philip* and *Isabella*. Intellectually the motive is absolutely simple. The boy gallops

past at an angle which brings him into the happiest proportion with his mount. His attitude is the natural one for a pupil of Philip and Olivares, two of the best horsemen in Europe; his look and gesture express just

*Queen Margarita. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

the degree of pride, delight, and desire for approval which charm in a child. Through all this Velazquez has worked for simplicity. He has been governed by the sincere desire to paint the boy as he was, with no parade or affectation. That done, he has turned his attention to æsthetic

effect. The mane and tail of the Andalusian pony, the boy's rich costume and his flying scarf, and the splendid browns, blues, and greens of the landscape background make up a decorative whole as rich and musical as any Titian. Not that it is in the least Titianesque. Its colour is, in a way, a better answer to the famous dictum of Sir Joshua than the *Blue Boy* itself, for although the tints are all warm and transparent, the general effect produced is cool and blue. Velazquez was afterwards to paint many pictures in which the more subtle resources of his art were to be more fully displayed than here, but he was never again to equal this *Don Balthazar Carlos* in the felicity with which directness and truth are clothed in the splendours of decorative colour, and that without drawing upon the more sonorous notes of the palette. Only once in after-life does he seem to have let himself go in the matter of colour, and to have tried what he could do, so to speak, with the trumpet. The extraordinary portrait of the Infanta Margarita in rose-colour against red was the result, but wonderful as it is, it leaves us cold beside the delicious tones, like those of a silver flute, of this *Balthazar Carlos*.

The full-length portraits of the same prince which hang in the Vienna Gallery, the Hague Museum, and Buckingham Palace belong to a different class. They are among the things painted to be given away to foreign potentates, and bear every mark of being done from studies and models. Only a great painter could have done them, especially the one at Vienna, but they are without the signs of keen living interest which breathe from the portraits at Madrid. They must have been painted about the year 1638, at the same time as the *Philip IV.* at Hampton Court, which they closely resemble. The Hampton Court *Isabella*, which now hangs as a pendant to the *Philip*, can only be accepted as a studio production.

Better known, perhaps, and more interesting than these, are the two pictures known as *Don Balthazar Carlos in the Riding School*, which belong respectively to the Duke of Westminster and Lady Wallace. They have been frequently exhibited, notably at the "Old Masters" in 1890, where they hung within a few feet of each other, and have always excited great admiration as typical examples of the master. And yet there appears to be comparatively little of the master's own work on either. When they were at the Academy I compared them touch for

*Philip IV. dressed for the Chase. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

touch and took some careful measurements, coming, or rather being forced, to the conclusion that they were both copied from some original now lost. The measurements showed that the two main groups, of the boy and his horse, were identical in size and form, even to a hair's breadth, that is, that they must have been mechanically transferred either one from the other or both from a third picture or cartoon. This, you may say, might have been done by a pupil as a preparation for the master. But look closely into the workmanship. You will find that the actual strokes of the brush are identical in both. Such things as the horse's white nose and the crimson *revers* of the boy's jacket are rendered with precisely the same touches. My reading of these two pictures, then, is this, they are both repetitions by a pupil from some original by Velazquez which probably never left Madrid, and was most likely destroyed in the fire of 1734. The backgrounds and the extreme dexterity of the imitation point to Mazo. But they are not wholly imitations. The master himself seems to have come in at the end and made a few alterations, still easily traced, and to have introduced with a hasty but unerring brush those subordinate figures which so greatly enhance the interest of the example at Grosvenor House. In 1890 I had never been to Madrid, and although I was convinced that neither picture was entirely by Velazquez, I could form no opinion as to the identity of his assistant. When at last I did find myself in the Museo del Prado, a glance at the two pictures by Mazo, already mentioned, was enough to show that he was the culprit. The same great though slightly superficial dexterity, the same touch of hotness in the colour, the same tendency to gesture in the carriage of the brush.

We have now arrived at about the year 1638, and at the crowning moment of what is called the second manner of Velazquez. The great picture is the *Surrender of Breda* (Plate III.), which has a satellite in the *Admiral Pulido-Pareja* of the National Gallery. The date of *Las Lanzas*—to give the *Surrender* its pet name—is not certainly known. In the Madrid Catalogue 1647 is named as the probable year, but for various reasons this seems much too late. Olivares handed over his gift of Buen Retiro to the king on December 1, 1633, and we know from a letter written by the Florentine Envoy at Madrid that the series of national victories with which seven Spanish painters were to decorate

the *Sala de los Reinos* was completed, with one exception, by the spring of 1835. One of the series was a *Surrender of Breda*, the commission for which had been given to José Leonardo. José failed so completely that Velazquez, who had been more or less responsible for the whole series, took the matter in hand, and when he had finished his version hung it up cruelly by the side of José's picture. The result, of course, was the supersession of the latter. Now it seems very improbable that twelve years would be allowed to elapse between the completion of the other pictures and this final touch. Velazquez, so far as we can tell, was prompt, and we know that Philip was impatient. All this points to a time not far removed from 1635 for the painting of *Las Lanzas;* and our argument is confirmed by another piece of evidence. No two works of Velazquez bear a stronger resemblance to each other, whether we look at conception or at technique, than the picture in question and the portrait of Admiral Pulido. So alike are they that we are induced to believe that they were in hand at the same time, and that the master passed currently from one canvas to the other. The *Pulido* is not in his usual vein when he had a sitter before him. It is stronger, I might say more violent, in expression; fatter, broader, more truculent, as it were, in touch. In fact, so far as execution goes, it would be quite at home on the canvas of *Las Lanzas*. And it is dated 1639, the year after a certain Don Adrian Pulido had stood in the breach of Fontarabia for six mortal hours, and had contributed mainly to the defeat of Richelieu's raid on the Spanish frontier fortress. It is pretty certain that this Don and Admiral Pulido were one and the same person, which so far confirms the date on the canvas. Palomino, indeed, tells us that "in the year 1639 he (Velazquez) made the picture of Don Adrian Pulido Pareja, a native of Madrid, Knight of the Order of Santiago, Admiral of the Fleet of New Spain, who about that time was here transacting various official matters with His Majesty. This portrait is life-size, and is among the most famous painted by Velazquez, on which account he put his name to it, which he seldom did elsewhere,—*Didacus Velazquez fecit; Philip IV., a cubiculo, eiusque Pictor, anno* 1639."[1] The inscription on the canvas does not exactly coincide with Palomino's version, which confirms the honesty of both. There seems, then, no room for

[1] *Museo Pictórico*, iii. 331.

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*"Don Juan of Austria." Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

doubt that 1639 really saw the painting of this Admiral, and so I have the more confidence in proposing 1638-39 as the real date of the *Surrender of Breda*.

In the July *Portfolio* the genesis of the picture was described at length, and need not be again referred to. Its treatment bears witness to the fine taste of Velazquez. Its conception is architectonic and thoroughly fitted for the place—in a wall, like tapestry—for which it was intended.

*Figures from the Boar Hunt. National Gallery.*
*Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

The masses are balanced with a symmetry not elsewhere attempted, while the movement of the figures, including that of Spinola's horse, suggests that circle in perspective which makes such an effective group. The colours are more varied and positive than usual, which is due partly to the nature of the subject, and partly, no doubt, to the necessity for playing on the same key as the six other "histories" which were to hang around it. The title of *The Lances* is thoroughly justified by the painter's use of those weapons. Without them the canvas would have

been cut into two "registers" by the long line of heads, which would have had a most unpleasant effect, especially when seen in conjunction with architectural forms. How cleverly, too, they suggest by their even lines, broken only by the detached weapons of a sergeant or two, the discipline of the Spanish infantry, and comment upon the clumsy pikes, held anyhow, of the defeated Dutchmen. Velazquez has been unable to resist the temptation which was afterwards to be too strong for Alfred de Neuville and Guy de Maupassant. He paints his Spaniards and his Dutchmen in very different colours. "Prince Justin lacks the high-bred air of the Genoese noble; and indeed the contrast between the soldiers of Spain and Holland is marked throughout with a somewhat malicious pencil, the former being all gentlemen and Castilians, and the latter all Dutch boors with immeasurable breeches."[1] Velazquez might have imitated the generosity of his own Spinola. He was without the smart of defeat, which goes some way to excuse the childish malice of the modern Frenchmen.

The hero of the scene is Spinola himself. It would be difficult to point to a nobler conception than that of his bending figure as he stoops to lay his hand on the shoulder of the beaten general. It has a touch of improbability about it, for after all Justin was the higher in rank and had obtained excellent terms for himself and his command. But the solicitude of a generous conqueror for the feelings of a vanquished enemy could not be more finely expressed; and it must not be forgotten that Velazquez had enjoyed every opportunity of hearing from the Genoese himself how things had passed. They had travelled together from Barcelona to Genoa in 1629, and the voyage had taken ten days. Add to this that before the picture was painted the disaster of Casale had taken place, and Spinola had sunk broken-hearted into his grave. Here, then, we have the tribute of Velazquez to a friend, as well as the noblest of monuments to a general.

The technique of the picture is worthy of its dramatic qualities. Variety of colour is used with infinite skill to avoid any sort of confusion, and to allow the element of accident to blend happily with that of deliberate organisation. The numerous figures fit the space on which they stand, details present and efface themselves in obedience to the

[1] Sir William Stirling-Maxwell.

Velasquez. pinx

Braun, Clement & Cie. ph. sc.

*The Surrender of Breda.*

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*El Primo, a dwarf.*[1], *Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

general scheme, the handling never fails to help the impression, while for the imagination which cares to wander, hints at the whole drama of the Spanish conquest of the Netherlands are contained in the smoking country beyond. Some of the finest passages elude the power of words to convey

*El Bobo de Coria. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurent.*

them. Look, for instance, at Spinola's horse, how in form, colour, and movement he supports and completes the conception. Everything about him, from the light on his croup to the turn of his head and the cock of his ears, does its work in deepening and giving point to the composition.

The *Surrender of Breda* has long been accepted as the finest historical picture in existence; I feel inclined to call it the only one which gives unalloyed delight.

*The Lances* and *Admiral Pulido* bring us to the end of the more important pictures which were confessedly painted before the second visit to Italy. The equestrian portraits of Philip III. and his queen Margarita of Austria (reproduced on p. 47) passed, indeed, through the painter's studio about this time. A Spanish tradition asserts that they were painted on by Philip IV. himself, which may or may not be true. The hand of Velazquez is traceable in the figure and horse of Philip, in the horse of Margarita, and in the backgrounds of both, to which he seems to have added the strips, about eighteen inches broad, by which the canvases are increased at either side. To the years between 1642 and 1649 may also be referred the Aranjuez landscapes, the *Boar Hunt* of the National Gallery, of which more will have to be said presently, and many of the portraits scattered over Europe in which the *personnel* of the master's studio took its part. It is possible, too, that the series of dwarfs and buffoons and other *hombres de placer* belong mainly to these years. Two of them, certainly, give signs of being earlier than the rest, and may with some confidence be ascribed to about 1647. I mean the *Pernia*, called *Barbarroja*, or "Redbeard," and the individual known as *Don Juan of Austria*. Both are sketches or unfinished pictures, which brings in an element of doubt, but on the whole they have most affinity with the work done about 1646-48. As for the rest of the series, they seem to group themselves round the years of their author's second absence from Spain, so that this will be as good a place to discuss them as any other.

The sudden intrusion of all these "sports" among the princes and courtiers who formed the *clientèle* of Velazquez is a little curious, and may possibly have an explanation which, so far as I know, has never yet been suggested. Olivares, the rock on which the favour of Velazquez had originally been founded, was disgraced and exiled from Madrid in 1643. According to all precedent, the painter should have taken this opportunity of finding out that his affection for his patron was not so great as he had fancied. He did nothing of the kind. He went on multiplying the Count-Duke's portraits, and even consoled his solitude. Philip had no rancour in his composition, but he may well be forgiven if

*Sebastian de Morra, a dwarf. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

he shrank for a time from the society of the fallen Minister's friend and *protégé*, and, in any case, we may be sure that his courtiers would look askance at the painter until they saw how the cat would jump. For a year or two, then, his studio in the Alcazar may have been comparatively deserted, and as, unlike Rembrandt, he was not fond of reproducing his own features, he may have amused himself by painting the idlers of the palace. This suggestion, no doubt, brings the series I am alluding to as far forward in his career as 1643-44, which seems rather early for such things as *El Bobo de Coria* and *Mœnippus*. But when a painter has only himself to please he constantly anticipates the freedom and audacity to which, in commissioned pictures, he was only to attain at a later time, and this may have been the case with Velazquez. I offer this explanation for what it is worth.

In any case, there can be no doubt that all these pictures were painted within short intervals of one another. They are marked by greater spontaneity, directness, and unity, both of conception and technique, than the rest of his work. The *El Primo*, which may be a little earlier than the rest, looks as if it had been created by a single act of volition, to the exclusion of any doubt or even moment of consideration,—*Veni, vidi, pinxi!* might be its motto; and yet the design is monumental and gives extraordinary dignity to the little figure. *Don Sebastian de Morra* is almost as fine, although sitting does not seem to have been so congenial to him as to *El Primo*. The *Idiot of Coria* and *Child of Vallecas* repeat the technical mastery of the others, but in a slightly different way. Compared to the *Idiot of Coria*, *El Primo* is tight and fused. As he went on, the painter seems to have experimented, till at last, in the modelling of the idiot's head, his brush takes audacious, but never irrelevant, flights. Another experiment is discernible in the *Æsop*. Here the head is modelled with a fuller brush than Velazquez ever used elsewhere. It is loaded apparently for the sake of loading, and consequently produces a less sincere result than the others. The *Mœnippus* is built up with more restraint and a juster fitting of means to ends. Mr. Stevenson says the *Æsop* is the "one [picture by Velazquez] which most supports the legend of his swaggering dexterity in flourishing a paint-brush," but he also calls it the most cleverly handled of his heads. To me its effect is disagreeable, or rather

not so agreeable as it might be, simply because there is more paint upon it than is wanted. In the *Mœnippus*, on the other hand, the modelling emerges through successive drags of the brush, diminishing as the surface

*El Niño de Vallecas. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurent.*

is reached, and ending in a true skin. The drawing is a little curious, the slope of the features, from right to left, being too great for the hang of the head. But the drawing of Velazquez was often careless.

These pictures, then, bring us to the end of the second period of

Velazquez, and perhaps beyond it. I may, however, point out one piece of evidence as yet unnoticed which seems to support the ascription of the series of palace retainers to the years immediately before his second visit to Italy, I mean the similarity in style between them and that portrait of Juan Pareja which was painted, as we shall see presently, at the beginning of his stay in Rome. In conception, colour, and brushing the *Pareja* agrees with *El Primo* and *Don Sebastian de Morra*, while the picture by which it was immediately followed, the portrait of Innocent X., turns the master's thoughts again to the more decorative side of his art, and starts the series to which the *Coronation of the Virgin*, the *Mars*, the *Meniñas*, the *Infanta Margarita*, and the *Tapestry Weavers* belong.

# CHAPTER VI

## SECOND STAY IN ITALY

### 1649–1651

During the first months of his second stay in Italy Velazquez seems to have been entirely occupied with his work for the king. His brush lay idle, and his time was passed with picture-dealers, moulders, sculptors, and decorators. So that, when at last he was commanded to the Vatican to paint the Pope, he had to take a preliminary canter to supple his joints. His faithful Morisco, Pareja, offered a convenient model, and Velazquez painted the portrait alluded to in the last chapter. Pareja has given us a version of his own features in his large picture of the *Calling of St. Matthew* at Madrid. Here he has been kind to himself, and has Europeanised his own half-African physiognomy. But, in spite of this, we have no difficulty in identifying this rather good-looking young Spaniard with the swarthy Othello who looks out upon us with so tell-tale a glance from the two canvases at Castle Howard and Longford Castle. One of these must be the picture with which Velazquez got his hand in at Rome, and Lord Carlisle's version seems to have the better claim of the two. The painter has wasted time on no preliminaries, although the slave has had a moment to put on a clean collar and his best cloak. He stands up, his head turned slightly over his right shoulder, and his muscular right hand placed on the bend of his left arm. A whole history is written in the expression of his face. In some ways we know more about Pareja than Velazquez did when he began this picture. We know that he was a surreptitious painter, and that the look of "I could, an if I would," handed down to us by the unerring eye of his master, had not a little behind it.

Obedience, pride, and a touch of humour, as if the Morisco were saying to himself, "If he only knew!" complete the expression. In conception, colour, and handling this portrait has more affinity, as we have seen already, with the series of dwarfs than with other works of the master. It is built up not so much by planes set side by side and then brought to a surface by half-tones laid upon them, as by a gradual reduction of the planes in successive paintings, according to the impact of the light. The brow, the cheeks, the hand are domes built up by overlaid and constantly diminishing drags of the brush.

Although this portrait was a preparation for painting the Pope, Velazquez saw the necessity for going to work in a different fashion when he found himself in the Holy Father's presence. Popes are not Moorish slaves, and painters must catch them as they can. Innocent X. agreed to sit to Velazquez, but the sitting probably meant that the painter was allowed to take his easel into the presence-chamber and do the best he could while his Holiness transacted business or listened to his secretaries. However this may have been, Velazquez slightly modified his system of painting a head.

But I must begin by saying a word about the numerous versions of the portrait in question. The great picture itself lives in a *gabinetto* opening off the gallery of the Doria-Pamfili Palace in Rome. This is the portrait delivered to the Pope. Curtis mentions in his Catalogue[1] no less than sixteen pictures claiming to be either original replicas or sketches. Several of these I have seen, but the only one that is clearly by Velazquez himself is the bust at Apsley House. Even here it is possible that some other hand has painted the background and the dress, although I am inclined to think that they too are by Velazquez, though probably later than the head. I have not seen the version at St. Petersburg, which is there called a sketch—Justi thinks it, too, may be by the master's own hand. None of the others have any claim to respect, least of all the very bad copy which was exhibited at the New Gallery in 1896. As for the Duke of Wellington's picture, which was also at the New Gallery, it is probably the study on which the larger portrait was afterwards founded. Its execution has been very

[1] Charles B. Curtis, *Velazquez and Murillo, a Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of their Works*, 1883.

rapid. On a reddish first painting the modelling has been built up with small, square drags of the brush, following the forms, and laid with that vivid rightness which only comes of intense attention. There is no loading, no doing one thing twice, no impasto for its own sake. Three sittings appear to have sufficed. At the first, the head was modelled broadly in half-tones. At the second, the higher lights were introduced and the general modelling completed, the first painting being still slightly "tacky." The third gave the smaller details of modelling, the sharp shadows about the eyes, mouth, nose, and ear, and the beard and moustache. To see in this the actual study of Velazquez is in accordance with his practice and with all the probabilities of the case. Compared with the finished picture, it has more subtlety and less force, the quality being due to the intensity of the master's attention while painting under difficulties, the defect probably to no more recondite cause than the white canvas, left uncovered, perhaps, till years afterwards.

The note of the Doria-Pamfili portrait is insistence. The Pope's head is very red in tone, his *capa*, of course, is red, and so is his *beretta*; he sits in a red chair, and the background is a red curtain. The only points of relief are the gold decorations of the chair, the Pope's white collar and surplice, and the letter in his left hand. We cannot resist a feeling at first that all this red was put there to justify the Holy Father's complexion, and, for a moment, a sense of being before a *tour de force* produces a certain disappointment. But this soon vanishes as the head begins to tell, and we realise at last what a living page of history is hidden away in this retired corner of a Roman Palazzo. The picture falls, perhaps, below some other things by Velazquez in one particular, I mean in *enveloppe*. The lights and shades are very sharply contrasted, and we miss the bath of silvery atmosphere in which most of his creations seem to swim. But how absolutely alive, with all his past and such potentialities as are left to him, the old man is! The suspicious cunning, the not unreserved sensuality, the vindictiveness, the emancipation from work-aday honesty which allowed the Cardinal Pamfili to pilfer rare books he could not buy,[1] the glance, almost of apprehension, which betrays one undergoing a new or at least infrequent experience, are all there. In the due subordination of one part to another, the picture is less supreme than

[1] D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, iii. 77 (1824).

some. In spite of its vivid life the head scarcely dominates its surroundings as perhaps it ought, and all these reds assert themselves a little overmuch. In a later work, the full-length of the Infanta Margarita in the Hall of Queen Isabella, we shall find Velazquez returning to a similar scheme and using it with a finer sense of what atmosphere does to colour.

It is said that in the conclave of 1645 the ugliness—enemies even went so far as to say the likeness to Satan!—of Cardinal Pamfili was urged against his election to the chair of St. Peter. Sir William Stirling-Maxwell also quotes[1] a story, according to which the Pope drove a nephew of his sister-in-law and mistress, Olympia Maldachini, from his presence as "an ugly whelp, even uglier and clumsier than I am." If these stories and others like them be true, Velazquez must have softened the worst features of his sitter, but his more kindly reading is confirmed by other portraits of Innocent, notably by the fine bust in the South Kensington Museum.

So far as we know, Velazquez painted nothing else during these two years in Italy, and his readiness to let his brush lie idle for so long has to be taken into account in forming an idea of his character. He returned to Spain in June 1651, having lingered in Rome until Philip's express command to return had reached him through the State Secretary, Don Fernando Ruiz de Contreras.

[1] *Artists of Spain*, p. 759 *note*.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE "THIRD MANNER OF VELAZQUEZ"

THE fashion of cutting up a painter's career into lengths and dubbing those lengths manners, is a little less futile than usual in the case of Velazquez. His two long absences from his native country mark with some precision points at which new waves of influence flowed in upon him. But even with him there is no such easily-perceived line of cleavage as the usual phraseology would imply. Offshoots from one manner project into the next, and he seems to have had a peculiar faculty for taking up a style for the nonce, induced thereto by accidental conditions. For the *Crucifixion* and the *Christ at the Pillar*, for the *Forge of Vulcan* and the *Joseph's Coat*, he adopted a manner based upon what he had seen in certain Roman studios; for the *Coronation of the Virgin* and the *Mars*, and perhaps for the *Venus*, he did much the same thing at, I believe, a much later date. In fact, when he had to step outside the bent of his own genius, he seems deliberately to have taken technical as well as imaginative hints from those he thought more *au fait* at the work. But in spite of all this, a little patient examination will disclose the steps of his development, and then the only problem is where to draw the line between one style and another. The series of dwarfs and buffoons is generally ascribed to his last manner, even to his last years. I have ventured to place them at the junction of his second and third styles, and to group them about the second Italian visit, doing so mainly on the evidence of style, but partly in the light of other considerations. In this connection another small point is perhaps worth making. Velazquez was no sooner back in Spain than he began to work for the appointment he afterwards received of the king's Quarter-

master. Thenceforward it is unlikely that he would find time hang so heavily on his hands that he had to amuse himself with painting the human menagerie of the palace. I am the more inclined to refer these pictures to the years between the fall of Olivares and 1650, as their absence from the list of things painted during the last ten years of his life will leave the said list a much happier family than it would be otherwise. Putting aside the *Mars* and the *Coronation of the Virgin*—and their difference is to be accounted for in a way quite consistent with the master's practice—the rest of his later things are all governed by a similar, though progressive, idea, and are marked by a method which changes only in the direction of increased freedom.

The succession of the portraits belonging to this period is easy to fix, as they are mostly of people at unmistakable ages. No doubt can be felt as to where one should put the several versions of the piquant little personality of the Infanta Margarita. Queen Mariana and the other Infanta, Maria Teresa, are scarcely more difficult, while the impassibility of Philip IV. is clearly approaching its grand climacteric in the marvellous bust of the National Gallery. But before we go on to speak of all these, it may be convenient to dismiss the two pictures which must be excepted from many of the remarks which apply to the rest.

*La Trinidad*, as the old inventories call the *Coronation of the Virgin*, was painted, according to Stirling,[1] for the oratory of Queen Isabella, who died in 1644. For Isabella Justi reads Mariana, and the picture is usually accepted as belonging to the years after 1650. It is clearly inspired by Italy, although it would not be easy to refer it to any individual painter. Had one any reason to believe that Velazquez had passed by Brescia, and spent a day or two in those churches brilliant with Morettos, we should feel inclined to credit that master with much that is fine in this *Coronation*. In arrangement it is curiously like a Moretto, while its colour is a translation of that painter's favourite scheme into a more sombre Spanish equivalent. During two years in Italy Velazquez may have gone to many places where he left no trace; he may have wandered as far even as the foot of the Alps; but in the absence of written or

[1] *Artists of Spain*, p. 805.

*Don Antonio Alonso Pimentel. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

traditional evidence it would be too bold, I suppose, even to suggest, seriously, that Alessandro Bonvicino should be included among those who had their effect upon his practice. It is the fashion to damn this particular picture with faint praise, but when we realise that it was painted in the middle of the seventeenth century, we should wonder to see it so good, and, on the whole, so sincere. It is a result, no doubt, of intellectual rather than spiritual energy. The conception is governed rather by taste than inspiration, rather by restraint than fervour. The model for the Virgin has been chosen for such qualities as befit a woman highly placed in this world, and not for the commingling of humility with a high spirituality which would probably have been the painter's aim had he lived a hundred and fifty years sooner. A dignified Spanish lady, exactly similar in type to the women you see in Madrid to-day, accepts the crown —a narrow wreath of roses—from the Three Persons of the Trinity, exactly as a Spanish queen might accept it from the Archbishop of Toledo. There is no inspiration, no faith of the emotional kind. But there is dignity, reserve, and abundant painter-craft. The picture does not move us like one of those fine Morettos to which I have compared it, but neither does it repel us and chill our sympathies beyond recovery, like a Guido or a Carracci.

The *Mars* may also have been painted about this time. In design it seems based on the well-known seated bronze, now ascribed to Scopas, which, however, received the title of *Mars* long after 1650. No picture by Velazquez has been so much abused as this, and truly it is not easy to dwell long upon it. The writer in the *Quarterly Review* (1872) who described it as a study from a broken-down acrobat was not far wrong. The face is beery and irresponsible, the figure quite without the hardness of muscle and general vigour we look for in the god of war. The accessories are just as heartless as the figure, and the work all through betrays a task done to order in which the painter took no kind of interest. A superficial resemblance in its workmanship to the *Christ at the Pillar* might suggest that the date generally given for this *Mars* is too late, but when we look into its fat impasto and broad, sometimes even empty, facility, we see that it would be unsafe to change its place in the chronology of its author's work.

It will be convenient here to notice a canvas which holds a place apart

*Mars. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

in the *œuvre* of Velazquez, I mean the *Venus* at Rokeby Park. This picture was practically unknown before it went to the Manchester Exhibition of 1857, and even there it attracted comparatively little notice, as the provincial Mrs. Grundy insisted on its being hung very high up the wall. It was lent to the "Old Masters," however, in 1890, where it was hung in the place of honour, and every opportunity was given for its close examination. It is impossible to deny that it stands outside the development of Velazquez in some details of manner, as well as in subject, but I think that the evidence, as a whole, points strongly to his authorship.

No doubts of its originality seem to have entered the mind of Stirling or Justi. The former tells us that Velazquez "was almost the only Spanish artist that ever attempted to delineate the naked charms of Venus. Strong in interest at Court and with the Holy Office, he ventured upon this forbidden ground at the desire of the Duke of Alba, and painted a beautiful picture of the Queen of Love reclining with her back turned, and her face reflected in a mirror, as a companion piece to a Venus in a different attitude of repose by Titian." The Titian had been painted for Philip II., and after 1636, when it was hanging in the king's bedchamber,[1] it was taken down to the loggia over the "Emperor's Garden." Both Venuses seem afterwards to have come into the possession of Godoy, Prince of the Peace. Early in the present century they are said to have travelled to England together, and to have been offered at the price of 4000 guineas. The version of Velazquez was finally bought on the advice of Sir Thomas Lawrence, says Stirling, by Mr. Morritt of Rokeby Park for £500. The pedigree has its weak points, and it is a little difficult to discover authorities for some of these assertions. But the tradition that Velazquez painted a Venus more or less in emulation of Titian, seems to be of respectable antiquity.

The picture is entirely Spanish, in spite of its Venetian inspiration. The chosen model has the long oval face, the square shoulders, the muscular waist and legs, and the broad hips of the Spanish women. The firmness of her flesh, and its freedom from those soft transitions which mark the women of Titian and Giorgione, seem to hint at some

[1] Justi, p. 462.

active occupation. She may have been a dancer. It has been suggested that the blurred, ill-defined appearance of her face in the mirror may be due to her wish to avoid recognition. That surely is a fantastic explanation, as her features might easily have been disguised. The truth is, of course, that a fully-defined head in this part of the canvas would have destroyed the pattern. It would have introduced a point of great interest, a point to which the eye would have been irresistibly attracted, exactly where it is not wanted. The head of Cupid, although not in so critical a place, is kept down for the same reason. The painter's object was to focus the attention on the sweeping lines of the back and legs, and to keep his chiaroscuro as simple as possible. The introduction of the piece of white drapery beyond the figure, driving back the mirror and accenting the salience of the left hip, puts a dot on the *i* of his intention. The greyish-purple quilt into which the lower contour sinks is nicely calculated to the same end, and on the whole it would be difficult to name a picture in which the artist's aim has been more subtly, and, at the same time, directly, achieved. The touch of green in the veil and the crimson of the curtain complete the colour scheme. So far as handling goes, the picture is the broadest and freest ever painted by Velazquez. The figure is modelled with long sweeps of the brush, travelling with extraordinary audacity and precision over wide planes, and establishing the form in despite, as it were, of probability. Examine that hip and thigh, note the apparent slightness of the means employed, and your eye will doubt its own witness to the completeness of the result.

When this *Venus* was exhibited at Burlington House in 1890, it awakened a certain amount of scepticism. It was seen to be very unlike the other examples of the master among which it hung. Its chord of colour was not quite what might have been expected, its handling was larger and more inclined to embrace two or three planes at once, and its general tone higher than usual. None of the comparisons which might have dispelled these objections could be made without going to Madrid. There, in the *Tapestry Weavers*, in the *Anchorites*, in the *Martinez Montañes*, and, above all, in the *Mercury and Argus*, evidence would be found to show that Velazquez occasionally came very near to the technique of the *Venus*, while its unusual general aspect was to be explained, simply enough, by the novelty of the subject and the external

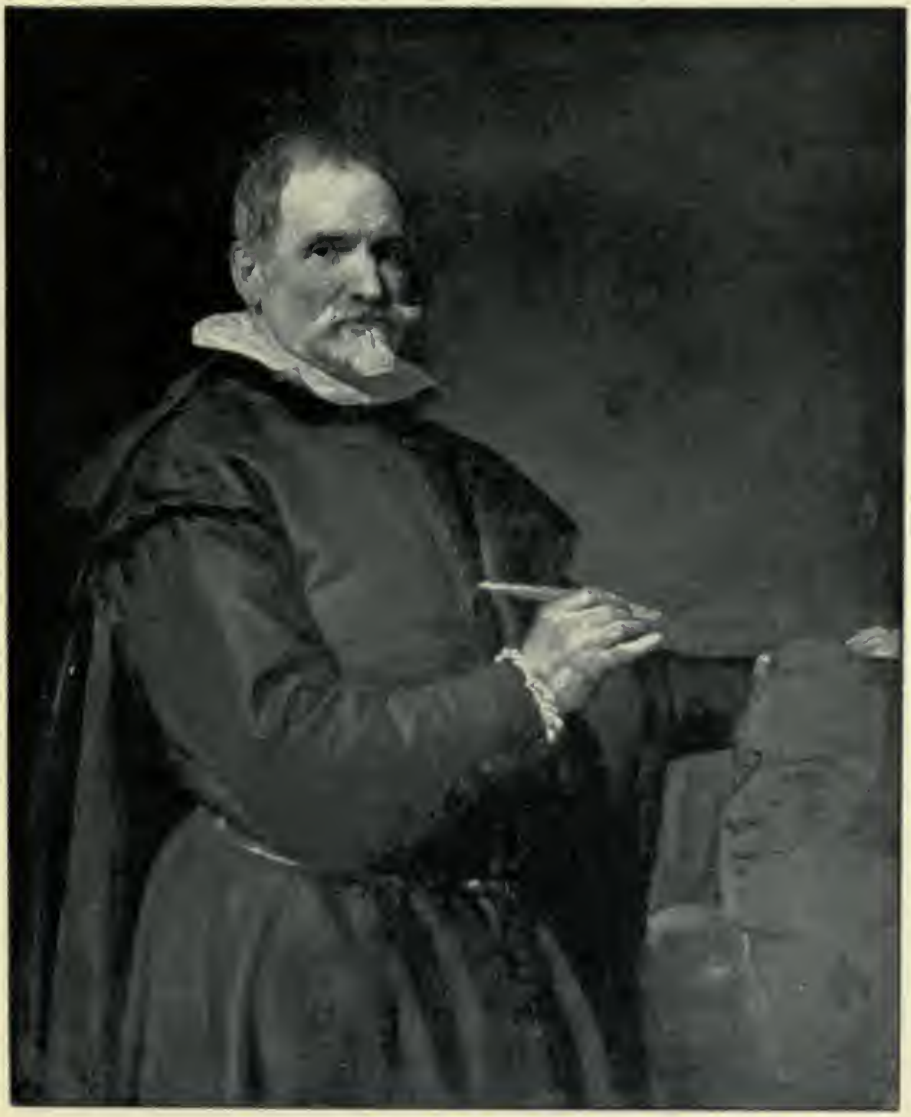
*Venus. Rokeby Park, Yorkshire. From a Photograph by E. Yeoman.*

source of his inspiration. If Velazquez did not paint it, who did? The only Spanish painter who could be seriously suggested in connection with it would be Alonzo Cano, who painted with some vigour, freedom, and largeness at the end of his career. But between anything known to be his and this picture there is a gulf, both of manner and merit, infinitely wider than that which separates it from the other works of Velazquez.

With one exception, the rest of his pictures are easily put in their approximate order. Most of them are portraits, while the three which are not, the *Tapestry Weavers*, the *Mercury and Argus*, and the *Anchorites*, otherwise *St. Anthony Abbot visiting St. Paul*, date themselves by their style. The exception is the portrait formerly known as *Alonzo Cano*, which is now believed to represent the sculptor, Martinez Montañes. Here we have a man perhaps sixty years of age, working with a modelling tool on a colossal clay bust in which, with a little good-will, we can make out some of the characteristic features of Philip IV. His dress is black, and the general tone of the picture sober and brown. It is one of the finest, and perhaps the most lovingly painted, of all the portraits of Velazquez. Justi thinks it must have been painted in 1636, when Montañes was in Madrid, and busy with a head of Philip for the use of Tacca, the sculptor, to whom a bronze statue of the king had been entrusted. The style, however, suggests a later date, and perhaps it would be nearer the mark to suppose that Montañes sat for his portrait in 1648. In that year he was again in the capital, beseeching the king for payment for the work done twelve years before. The portrait is carried out in much the same way as the *Mœnippus*, the modelling being built up in successive drags, or smears, put on, apparently, before the paint beneath had become quite dry. The right hand is a wonderful piece of work, although it does hold the modelling tool so like a pen. We know by his conduct to Olivares how faithful a friend Velazquez could be, and this elaborate portrait may well have been his testimony of sympathy with Montañes in his many disappointments.

The other portraits of his later years need not be discussed one by one. It will suffice to point out that the *Infanta Margarita* at Vienna (*Portfolio* for July, p. 85) must have been painted in or about 1653, that in the Louvre a year or so later, about two years before the *Meniñas*. The second portrait at Vienna, which was sent there in 1659, with its

companion piece of the Infante Prosper, must have been executed in 1658, and the picture in the Sala de la Reina Isabella later still, in fact at the



*Portrait of the sculptor Martinez Montañes. Museo del Prado, Madrid. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

very end of his life. Margarita was only nine years old when the painter died, and she is clearly not far short of that age here. Many replicas,

partial and otherwise, of these pictures are scattered over Europe, but I have never seen one that seemed to me entirely, or even mainly, by the master's own hand.

The portraits of Queen Mariana, the lady who was first betrothed to Don Balthazar Carlos but lived to marry his father, also present many difficulties. They are bewildering in number, but not many can play, even for a few minutes, the part of a Velazquez. The two full-lengths in the Prado Museum, of which the finer hangs upstairs in the long gallery, are famous and have been extravagantly praised, but they are not in the first line of the master's productions. He does not seem to have been interested in his sitter. The work is monotonous and sleepy, and conveys no impression of a desire to create. The portrait painted by Mazo while Velazquez was away in Italy seems to have disappeared, although all the painters of Madrid and the king himself proclaimed it a marvel of art. Not the least interesting glimpse we catch of Mariana through the pencil of Velazquez is the little head in the mirror in the *Maids of Honour*, the culminating picture of the artist's last period.

*Las Meniñas*, or the *Maids of Honour*, often called by the Spaniards *La Famiglia*, must have been painted at latest in 1656, judging from the apparent age of the little personage who is its central figure. Its actual genesis can only be matter of conjecture, but it seems probable that, when the painter was commanded to do for the little Infanta what he had done for all the other members of Philip's family, she proved a refractory sitter. The idea then occurred to him to show her in that character, as frankly as he dared. The earlier portraits of her are hasty and summary in execution, as if he had already experienced the difficulty of transferring her features to canvas. The room in which the action takes place was no doubt his studio in the Alcazar. Thither the little lady has been brought, with her father and mother to keep order, her *meniñas* to wait upon her, her dwarfs and a big dog to amuse her. In spite of it all, however, she refuses to "face the music," and the idea of painting her in the only character in which she will consent to show herself naturally sprang up. It is more than probable that Velazquez always made great use of the looking-glass. More than once we have found him introducing mirrors into his pictures, and his technical aims were just those for which such things are most useful. The chief group,

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*Queen Mariana. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

then, here not only suggests a mirror, but was probably painted with the help of one. The curious involution to which this leads gives a touch

*Las Meniñas* (*The Maids of Honour*). *Museo del Prado.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurent.*

of humour to the conception, and adds to its interest. In the light of all we are told of Spanish etiquette, the introduction of himself in such a conspicuous place, while the king and queen are only shadowed in a

glass, speaks volumes for the terms on which he was with Philip. The story of the Cross of Santiago is so pleasant and so probable in itself that we do not like to allow dry consideration of dates to upset it, more especially as the deductions drawn from them are by no means conclusive. We may still look upon *Las Meniñas* as not only the masterpiece, taking everything into consideration, of Velazquez, but also the picture which most strongly moved his royal patron, and obtained for him one of the most coveted of Spanish decorations.

*Las Meniñas* is distinguished from all the other works of the master by its dealings with light. We feel before it that Velazquez might have seen a De Hooch, and so been stimulated to render the play of light and shadow in an interior by means not unlike those employed by the Dutch master. As a fact, he could not have seen anything of the kind. De Hooch was a much younger man than himself; and even if Velazquez had survived up till now, he would never have made acquaintance with his art in Spain. And yet in many ways the picture is extraordinarily like an expanded De Hooch. The figures, set under the high light which streams from the upper part of the window, are painted simply, directly, but with touches of glazing in the shadows, just as De Hooch painted his little men and women in such interiors as those in the National Gallery and the collection of Lord Francis Hope. The background and the ceiling, which carries our interest to the top of the tall canvas, are marvels of luminous shadow, in which space is modelled, as it were, with the help of transparent over opaque colour. This gives a depth and richness to the *chiaroscuro* which we miss in the *Hilanderas*, the picture which otherwise comes nearest in conception to the *Meniñas*. In the *Hilanderas* the painting is mostly solid, glazing being used very sparingly. Depth is given entirely by truth to values, and the painter makes little or no attempt to render the difference in kind between reflecting and absorbent surfaces. In the *Meniñas* this difference is rendered with extraordinary subtlety, so that, as we sit and gaze into it, we feel that we are really looking into the mysterious depths of a solemnly-lit Spanish interior.

The *Hilanderas* (spinners), or *Tapestry Weavers*, shows Velazquez at his very highest point as a craftsman. Here he makes use of no sort of process, but paints straight away, trusting to his unerring eye

for value to keep everything in its proper place, and to lead the spectator's eye about and through his canvas as he wants it to go. The design has a touch of artifice about it here and there. The older woman's bare leg and the white scarf wound about her head, as well as the action of the girl near her in holding back the red curtain, are perhaps a little too obviously suggested by technical requirements, but the younger spinstress is a marvel of natural dignity, while the grandeur and coherence of the pattern, as a whole, is undeniable. The least successful passage is, no doubt, the central part of the background, where the three living figures confuse themselves uncomfortably with those on the tapestry attached to the wall. Here Velazquez has, for once, come near to failing with his problem. Sunlight falling diagonally, as it does here, on a flat, woven surface, would assimilate the most different tones, and bring them much nearer to each other than the real lights and shadows on a draped figure placed under the same illumination. In the picture the lights and shadows on the most conspicuous of the living women are scarcely more forcibly contrasted than those on the feigned figures in the hanging. It may be said that the painter did this purposely, for the sake of breadth and non-intervention with the foreground groups. But nothing fights more efficiently against repose in a work of art than anything in the nature of a puzzle, and the contents of this recess are a puzzle.

The figures in front are painted with a certainty of hand and eye, and a fulness of co-operation between the two, unequalled elsewhere in art. More than anything else he did, do they justify the declaration that Velazquez willed his figures on to the canvas. Their relief is astonishing, and the sense of space on the floor; and yet it would not be easy to explain the lighting of it all. Where does the light on the ladder come from? The chief figures in front are illumined from a high window over the head of the spectator, but its light wanders a little capriciously, bringing out such a passage as the back and arm of the girl on our right, and leaving less desirable things in judicious obscurity. But be all this as it may, the *Tapestry Weavers* remains, in spite of modern profiting by its own example, the most astonishing piece of workmanship in its own class that the world possesses.

Probably about the same time Velazquez painted the *Mercury and Argus* as a pendant to his *Apollo and Marsyas* in the Alcazar. Both are

entered in the inventory made six years after the painter's death as "original works of Velazquez." The *Mercury and Argus* stands apart among his works. More than anything else does it show a sense of imaginative design, by which I mean a pattern not only in harmony with, but actively assisting, the idea. Sleep and impending death,—those ideas are suggested by this conception just as they might be by music. In nearly all his other pictures Velazquez is content to put down on canvas what he had seen, to exhibit human beings living, acting, displaying themselves in the moments of life he had to deal with. Here, as in the *Christ at the Pillar*, he sends your imagination outside his canvas, and strikes a kindred note to what he cannot portray. The *Mercury and Argus* is hung high up, over the *Virgen del Pez*, in the Hall of Queen Isabella, so that little beyond its general drift can be seen ; but in spite of this, it dwells in the memory as one of the most insistent things in the whole collection. Later still is the *Visit of St. Anthony to St. Paul*, often called the *Anchorites*. Cool, almost to excess, in colour, more off-hand in execution than anything else he did, conceived on lines which recall Bassano and the more formless of the Italians, it is a creation apart, not only in the work of Velazquez, but in Spanish art as a whole. He seldom painted better, he never painted with less forethought, less calculation as to where he was going before he finished, than here.

At the very end of his life, probably just before he left Madrid on that expedition to the frontier as Aposentador Mayor which may have brought on his last illness, he painted a remarkable group of portraits. These are the *Philip IV., old*, of the National Gallery, the *Infanta Margarita* and the *Infante Prosper* at Vienna, and the *Infanta Margarita* in the Hall of Queen Isabella at Madrid. Judging from the style, the earliest of these is the *Philip;* the Infanta's apparent age makes it pretty certain that the Madrid *Margarita* was the latest. It is difficult to write about them. They are all four the outcome of more than forty years spent in exploring the possibilities of paint. They are all marked by the same miraculous skill in the management of silvery tones, in the building up of flesh by means so subtle and unerring that the eye is baulked and disconcerted, and persuaded of the futility of its own attempts to analyse or imitate. The head of Philip, especially, sets all emulation at defiance. The pendulous, anæmic flesh of an used-up *viveur*, of a

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*St. Anthony visiting St. Paul.*

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*viveur* in whom propensity took the place of passion, and lethargic that of active vice, seems to be put upon canvas by a pure act of volition.

*The Infanta Margarita. Louvre.*
*Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

Philip IV., as history paints him, a Charles II. without his wit, lives on the canvas of Velazquez and seems to challenge future kings to the one con-

test in which he need fear no fall.[1] The Vienna pictures are marked by the same spontaneity. The painter seems to have found a glance at the two little royalties enough to settle how he was to treat them. There they are, set down in their ordinary surroundings, depending on nothing but the airy dexterity, the unerring suggestion, the perfect gravity and taste of the master for their immortality. The last *Margarita* is more ambitious. Indeed, from what we divine of the painter's character, it is a little surprising to find him in this penultimate year of his life troubling himself to formulate such a conception at all. Margarita was born in 1651 ; the career of Velazquez, the painter, came to an end about the first of April 1660. In the picture the Infanta looks at least eight or nine years old. In fact, it is a little hard to believe she could have been so young, for the face would do for a girl of thirteen or fourteen. In the Catalogue of the Museo del Prado this picture figures as a *Maria Teresa*. It was Justi who first drew attention to the greater likeness, which seems undeniable, between the little sitter and the Infanta Margarita. But I confess the question of age is puzzling. The conception is one of the most daring Velazquez ever ventured on. The Infanta's costume is rose-pink embroidered with silver ; the head-dress is nearly scarlet, and the curtain behind a deeper pink than the dress. The general scheme is pale crimson shimmering through silver, with a rather pallid, anæmic little face as its centre. The handling has settled on the canvas like a shower of feathers, and the whole effect is indescribably airy and gallant. In all probability this is the last picture painted by Velazquez. Numerous repetitions exist of the head and bust, but I know none in which his own hand can be detected.

[1] The replica, with some slight differences, of this portrait, which hangs in the Museo del Prado, has been extravagantly praised. I confess that to me it seems to be a copy, painted, no doubt, in the master's studio.

*View of Saragossa. By Mazo-Martiñez. Museo del Prado.*
*From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### LANDSCAPES—THE QUESTION OF MAZO AND HIS OTHER PUPILS

So far, I have said nothing of Velazquez as a landscape painter, partly because his productions in that class are of comparatively slight importance, partly because the question is complicated by another which will have now to be treated in some detail. The Madrid Gallery has nine landscapes ascribed to the master. By far the most interesting, to my mind, are the two painted apparently direct from nature in the gardens of the Villa Medici at Rome. They remind one more of Constable than of any one else, so that here, too, he may be said to have anticipated modern tastes. The real play of sunlight among trees is the point he has insisted on ; his colour is fresh and silvery, like a Constable ; his touch light and feathery, like a Corot. The two pictures of the gardens at Aranjuez have darkened so much and are hung so high that I have some diffidence in speaking of them, but I confess they do not strike me as the work of Velazquez at all. They breathe a spirit foreign to anything we find in the rest of his pictures ; the figures are certainly not his, while the handling, so far as we can see it, is quite distinct from that of the Villa Medici pictures, and of the backgrounds to his portraits. Velazquez is supposed to have painted these pictures when he was at the Spanish Windsor with the king in 1642 ; some years before, he had painted the *Don Balthazar Carlos on Horseback*, why should he have deserted the brilliant lightness of the landscape behind the little prince for the heavy-handed gloom of these Aranjuez pictures?

But perhaps the most famous of his landscapes is that in the *Boar Hunt* of the National Gallery. This picture has undergone so many vicissitudes that some care has to be used in expressing opinions upon it.

In the main, it seems to me the work of Mazo. The only landscapes which can be ascribed with certainty to Velazquez are those behind his portraits, his *Surrender of Breda*, and his *St. Anthony and St. Paul*, and the two Villa Medici sketches. What resemblance is there between any

*Garden of the Villa Medici, Rome. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

of these and the landscape in the *Boar Hunt?* They are all grey, luminous, full of sun and air; whereas the glade in the Pardo in which the sport takes place is rendered with a heavy if robust hand, which takes little note of the blue skies and silvery distances which prevail on the plateau of Castile.

In 1645 Mazo was commissioned by the king to paint a view of Saragossa from a selected point on the south bank of the Ebro. He produced the picture (see p. 90) now hanging in the Museo del Prado,

*Garden of the Villa Medici, Rome. Museo del Prado, Madrid.*
*From a Photograph by Braun, Clément, & Cie. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

which bears the following decisive inscription: JUSSU PHILLIPI MAX. HISP. REGIS JOANNES BAPTISTA MAZO [*in a double monogram*] URBI CÆSAR. AUG. ULTIMUM PENICILLUM IMP. ANNO MDCXLVII. It has always hung in the clear air of Madrid, and so does not show the effects of dirt and cleaning like the *Boar Hunt*. But apart from its higher

tone, it is quite similar both in manner and outlook to the latter. The figures in the foreground of the *Saragossa* are often assigned to Velazquez. I believe they are by Mazo himself. Neither in colour nor in handling do they recall the master. The group known as *Réunion de Gentilshommes* in the Louvre is obviously by the same hand as the figures in the view of Saragossa. In all these groups the chord of colour is not that of Velazquez, while it is exactly similar to what we see in the *Don Tiburcio*. The handling, too, is more characteristic of Mazo than of his father-in-law. It is clever, "slick," fat, and amusing rather than directly addressed to the matter in hand. Mazo had great facility. His authentic pictures allow of no doubt upon that point. And yet, as I have already said, the works ascribed to him are very few. Besides the pictures in the Museo del Prado, which number twelve altogether, I think he had his share in all those so-called works of his master in which dexterity is deliberately displayed. Velazquez himself was never guilty of any such proceeding. In none of those pictures at Madrid which fit into the indisputable chain of his development do we ever find that irresponsible brush-flourishing which is too often taken to be a feature of his art. Velazquez had perfect taste, a quality in which Mazo was deficient. The figures in the *Boar Hunt* (p. 55) are not exactly like anything in the indubitable works of Velazquez, but they are stronger in execution, richer in colour, and more vital in effect than those in the other two pictures. They are not too fine for the painter of the *Don Tiburcio de Redin* at Madrid, but, on the whole, it seems probable that Mazo had comparatively little to do with this part of the picture. Among the pictures assigned to Velazquez at Madrid, I think the two praying portraits of Philip and Queen Mariana should be given to Mazo, although their lofty place on the wall makes a decision difficult. The Aranjuez landscapes also appear to me his. The standing portrait (No. 1083) of Don Balthazar Carlos, which Justi calls one of the few mediocre works of Velazquez, is not good enough for him, but he probably had the chief hand in painting the *Philip IV.* at Dulwich (the so-called Fraga portrait), as well as the full-length from Hamilton Palace in the National Gallery; while the two riding-school pictures, at Hertford House and Grosvenor House respectively, also bear signs of his co-operation. The *Landscape, with a duel in the Prado*, bequeathed

*Réunion de Gentilshommes. Louvre. From a Photograph by J. Laurent. Engraved by T. Huson, R.P.E.*

to the National Gallery by Sir William Gregory, seems also to be by Mazo, but I have not had an opportunity of examining it closely. The figures repeat some of those in the *Boar Hunt.*

None of the other pupils had the ability of Mazo, but with him they are certainly responsible for most of the pictures which pass under the name of Velazquez outside Spain. Some day, perhaps, their work will be submitted to the sifting process which has already been applied to so many painters of Italy and Holland, and then the commanding personality of Velazquez will stand out in more definite lines than it does at present.

# CHAPTER IX

## CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to trace the development of Velazquez as it appears in those pictures, chiefly at Madrid, which are incontestably by his own hand. With a very few exceptions every picture mentioned belongs to the great series painted for the Spanish Court, so that, with their help, we get a clear idea of the direction taken by the master's powers from the beginning to the end. The conclusions to which we are led differ in many respects from those which seemed plausible before Madrid was visited. In the first place Velazquez never "shows off." From first to last it is almost impossible to find an authentic picture in which he indulges in any sort of paint-slinging for its own sake. With the one exception of the head of *Æsop*, he never fails to adapt his methods to the forms before him. In that particular picture the impasto is unreasonably solid, and suggests the idea that he was experimenting with the later style of Spagnoletto; but as an almost invariable rule, his handling, his impasto, his use of glazing, and so on, are governed entirely by the objective problems he set himself. As life went on and his faculties developed, he grew into an extraordinary power of grasping those essential features in an object to which it owed its character; but this gift, or rather achievement, was the result of long years of patient imitation, and down to the very end of his life it never led him into the exaggerated brush-gesture which is too often thought to be one of his merits.

The best way, perhaps, to give a true idea of the total impression left by Velazquez is to describe his method of setting about a picture as we gather it from the results. In the first place, he seems never to have felt

the slightest temptation to paint an abstract idea. No picture by him betrays the least inclination to moralise, sentimentalise, or preach. We cannot imagine any canvas of his bearing such a title as "Love," "The Angel of Death," or anything of that sort. His love of the concrete seems, indeed, to have been so exclusive that only in a few rare instances did he even paint action. Such movement as we find hinted at in his early works is scarcely to be dignified with the name of action. A boy lifting a cup to his lips, another thrusting out a dead fowl in the direction of the infant Christ, a boor bowing to a masquerading "Bacchus,"—these are almost the only instances I can think of in which, before the *Surrender of Breda*, he painted movement at all. There is none in the *Forge of Vulcan*, none, practically, in the *Joseph's Coat*. That he was not deficient in dramatic imagination, or rather in the combination of memory and observation which forms a good substitute for it, is proved by the *Surrender of Breda*, in which the action of the figures, slight as it is, is perfectly dramatic and suggestive. The equestrian portraits and *Las Hilanderas* complete the list of pictures in which any real attempt is made to portray movement, and they betray the master's natural disinclination to the task almost as strongly as the absolutely quiescent portraits.

The nearest approach to violent action is the canter of Don Balthazar's pony. As for strong emotion, the one picture in which he ventures upon anything of the kind is the *Christ at the Pillar* of the National Gallery. It is no libel, then, to say that Velazquez got all his inspiration through his eye. The few instances in which he seems to have gone through a process of mental incubation before he began to paint only serve to add point to the general truth. The first step he took towards the painting of a picture was the arrangement of one before his eye. Take the *Tapestry Weavers* as an example. It represents an actual scene, in a Spanish equivalent for the Gobelins. You can see the painter arriving there, taking stock of its artistic capabilities, and arranging figures and accessories. His picture was rehearsed, as it were, outside the canvas and then realised. Preparatory studies and sketches seem foreign to his genius. Very few drawings by him have survived, and those few are slight. Taste, judgment, and eye were for him the factors of success. You will search his works in vain for any sign of an attempt to enlarge the province of paint. He never tries to push the slightest action beyond

the point to which the eye can follow it, for the horse of Don Balthazar is too frank a symbol to be an exception. He seems to have been as free as Frans Hals from the itching desire which has besieged most great painters to suggest ideas by running round them. What he could not say straight out and with uncompromising directness he did not care to say at all. He is therefore the most objective of all great painters, and his art consists more exclusively than any one else's of interpretation carried to the highest point.

As for his technique, it followed a simple course of evolution from the beginning to the end. His object from first to last was truth to his impressions. Like those of other people, these were bald at first and their realisation laborious. As time went on he saw more, and made the necessary distinctions with a more unerring ease. But he never ceased to be satisfied with seeing and putting down what he saw. His authentic works are free from the slightest tendency to substitute cleverness for truth. He never "faked." His drawing scarcely deserves its reputation for correctness, indeed many of his pictures are curiously out in this respect; but it always strikes that note of sincerity which is better than precision.

His cardinal quality, however, was his extraordinary facility in seeing and reproducing every relation between tones. He threads his way through whole processions of values with so convinced a certainty that we ask for nothing more. We put the same faith in his statements as we do in those of Shakespeare. What Shakespeare does for the inner man, Velazquez does for his form and envelope as he stands in the upper air. And he does it with the same gravity, the same sanity, the same utter absence of pose or self-assertion. The idea never enters his head that his own individual trick with the brush could have an interest for any human being. He paints now *staccato*, now with a smeary drag, just as the task before him suggests. He never steps forward and makes his own personality the centre of his own performance. His aim was the dignified interpretation of nature, of nature arranged and brought into agreeable juxtapositions, no doubt, but not of nature bedizened, or cajoled, or forced; and in making for it he took the surest and most simple, if not always the shortest, route. His imagination had reserves into which we get a hasty glance now and

*Drawing of Horses. British Museum.*

then. The *Christ at the Pillar* and the *Mercury and Argus* are two of these glances. But either through intellectual indolence or a deliberate conviction in favour of restricting paint to the interpretation of what the painter can set up in front of him, his creative fancy was very seldom allowed to substitute itself for the results of memory and observation.

Behind the art of Velazquez we seem to discern a man of strong sense rather than of any great intellectual activity; an indolent man, with persistent rather than spurring ambitions; a modest man, in spite of his snub to José Leonardo; an honest, generous, and domestic creature, to whom the friendship of a king of Spain would be a pleasant but by no means a dazzling adventure, and the right to carry the key of the *Aposentador Mayor* an honour prized more for what others thought of it than for any keenness on his own part to play the courtier.

That he was not without a touch of Latin prudence we divine from his readiness to do the work and take the pay of a royal domestic when he might have been creating in his studio, but the consoling fact that his affairs were in some disorder when he died, shows that he did not carry that virtue to excess. We know little or nothing of his daily life, of his sayings and opinions, or of the feelings he inspired in those about him, for Pacheco was hardly more of an artist with the pen than with the brush, and his panegyrics on his son-in-law remind us rather of Hayley than of Boswell. No great painter has left less of himself outside his work than Velazquez, and yet of all those who have built up the commanding fabric of modern art, he seems by far the nearest to ourselves.

# INDEX


Academy, The Royal, 48
"Adoration of the Kings, The," 7, 18, 21
"Adoration of the Shepherds, The," 18, 21, 36
"Æsop," 23, 62, 98
"Aguador, El" ("The Water-seller"), 18, 21, 25, 26
Alcazar, The, 21, 22, 23, 26, 62, 80, 85
"Anchorites, The," 23, 76, 78, 86, 92
"Antonio the Englishman, Don," 8
"Apollo and Marsyas," 85
Apsley House, 21, 23, 25, 66
Aranjuez, 60, 91, 94
Avila, 13

"Balthazar Carlos, Portraits of Don," 13, 22, 23, 44, 46-51, 80, 91, 94, 99, 100
Barcelona, 56
Berenson, Bernard, 30
Berlin, 26, 42
Bermudez, Cean, 40
"Boar Hunt, The," 60, 91, 92, 94, 97
"Bobo de Coria, El," 23, 62
Bode, Dr., 14
Bologna, 40
"Borrachos, Los" ("The Topers"), 22, 32, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41
"Breda, Surrender of." *See* "Lanzas, Las"
Brescia, 70
Buckingham Palace, 23, 48
Buen Retiro, 51
Burlington House, 15, 76

Cano, Alonzo, 35, 78
Capitol, Gallery of the, 41
Carlisle, Lord, 23, 44, 65
Carracci, The, 22, 72
Cassel, 30
Castile, 92
Castle Howard, 65
Charles III., 11
Charles V., 26, 32
"Christ at the Pillar," 22, 42-44, 69, 72, 86, 99, 102
"Christ in the House of Lazarus," 21
Coello, Sanchez, 26, 35
Cook, Sir Francis, 21
"Coronation of the Virgin, The," 7, 23, 64, 69, 70, 72
Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Messrs., 12
"Crucifixion, The," 7, 22 42, 44, 69
Cruz, Pantoja de la, 26
Cuijp, Albert, 25
Curtis, C. B., 8, 66

Domenichino, 40
Dorchester House, 21, 35
Doria-Pamfili Palace, 23, 66
Dulwich Gallery, 9, 94
Dürer, Albert, 12

Escorial, The, 7, 13, 22, 40
Eyck, Jan van, 12, 13

Ferdinand VII., 11, 13
"Fernando, Portrait of Don," 22 45 46
Fontarabia, 52
"Forge of Vulcan, The," 22, 40, 41 44, 99
Fraga, 94

Genoa, 40, 56
Giorgione, 12
Godoy, Prince of the Peace, 75
Goya, 12
Greco, El, 36
Gregory, Sir W., 97
Grosvenor House, 51, 94
Guercino, 40
Guido, 22, 40, 41, 72

Hague Museum, The, 48
Hamilton Palace, 21, 94
Hampton Court, 48
Herrera, Francisco de, 25, 40
Hertford House, 94
"Hilanderas, Las" ("The Tapestry Weavers"), 23, 30, 36, 64, 76, 78, 84, 85, 99
Hooch, Pieter de, 84

"Innocent X., Portrait of," 23, 64, 66, 67, 68
"Isabella de Bourbon, Portrait of," 23, 46, 48, 70
Italy, 22, 23, 36, 64, 65, 68, 70, 80

"Juan of Austria, Don," 23, 60
Juanes, Juan de, 26
"Joseph's Coat," 22, 40, 44, 69, 99
Justi, Carl, 22, 42, 66, 75, 88, 94
Justin of Nassau, 56

"Landscape, with a Duel in the Prado," 94, 97
"Lanzas, Las" ("The Lances" or "Surrender of Breda"), 9, 13, 23, 24, 44, 51, 52, 55-60, 92, 99
Lawrence, Sir Thomas, 75
Leonardo, José, 52, 102
Longford Castle, 65
Louvre, The, 23, 78, 94

Madrid, 9-13
Maldachini, Olympia, 68
Manchester Exhibition, 44, 75
March, Esteban, 26
"Margarita of Austria, Portrait of," 60
"Margarita, Portraits of the Infanta," 23, 48, 64, 68, 70, 78, 79, 86, 88
"Maria of Hungary, Portrait of," 42
"Maria Theresa, Portraits of the Infanta," 70, 88
Mariana, Queen, 70
"Mariana, Portraits of Queen," 23, 70, 80, 94
"Mars," 7, 23, 64, 69, 70, 72
Mazo-Martiñez, J. B. del, 7, 21, 51, 80, 92, 93, 94
Medici, the Villa, 91
"Meniñas, Las" ("The Maids of Honour"), 9, 13, 23, 64, 78, 80, 84
"Mercury and Argus," 23, 36, 44, 76, 78, 85, 86, 102
"Mœnippus," 13, 23, 62, 63, 78
"Montañes, Portrait of Martinez," 23, 76, 78
Morales, Luis de, 26
Morelli, Giovanni, 15
Moretto (A. Bonvicino), 70-72
Moro, Antonio, 12
Morritt, Mr., 75
Murillo, 26
Museo Nacional, 13

National Gallery, 8, 14, 18, 21, 22, 23, 35, 36, 42, 44, 51, 60, 70, 84, 86, 91, 94, 97, 99
Naples, 42
Navarrete, J. F., 26
New Gallery, 8, 66
"Niño de Vallecas, El," 23, 62

"Old Woman cooking Eggs," 21
Olivares, 26, 51, 60, 78
"Olivares, Portraits of," 21, 23, 30, 35, 46
"Orlando, the Dead," 26
Orrente, Pedro, 26

"Pablillos de Valladolid, Portrait of," 21, 35
Pacheco, Francisco, 25, 26, 40, 41
Palomino, 52
Pareja, Juan de, 8, 23, 64-66
"Pernia, Portrait of," 23, 60
Petersburg, St., 66
Philip II., 12, 26, 32, 75
"Philip III., Portrait of," 60
Philip IV., 9, 12, 22, 26, 29, 60, 78, 84, 102
"Philip IV., Portraits of," 18, 21, 22, 23, 30, 35, 46, 48, 70, 86, 87, 94
Philip V., 13
Phillip, John, 15
Placido, Convent of San, 22, 42
Poussin, Nicholas, 22, 40, 41
Prado, Museo del, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 21, 22, 23, 25, 30, 40, 46, 80, 88, 94
"Primo, Portrait of El," 23, 62, 64
"Prosper, Portrait of the Infante," 23, 79, 86
"Pulido da Pareja, Portrait of Adrian," 23, 44, 51, 52, 55, 60

Raphael, 12, 13, 40
Rembrandt, 5-7, 9, 14, 15, 26, 30, 31, 62
"Réunion de Gentilshommes," 94
Ribalta, Francisco de, 26
Ribera, Jusepe, 26, 36, 98
Richelieu, 52
Rokeby Hall, 23, 75
Rome, 22, 40, 41, 42, 65, 68, 90
Rubens, 12, 22, 32, 35
Ruiz de Contreras, Fernando, 68

Sandrart, 40
"Saragossa, View of," 8, 93, 94
Savile, Lord, 42
"Sebastian de Morra, Portrait of," 23, 62, 64
Segovia, 13
Seville, 21
South Kensington Museum, 68
Spagnoletto, Lo. *See* Ribera
Spinola, 55-59
Stevenson, Mr. R. A. M., 16, 62
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir W., 68, 70, 75
Stuttgart, 31

Tacca, Pietro, 78
Teniers, 12
Tintoretto, 12, 13, 40
Titian, 12, 13, 26, 29, 32, 40, 75
Toledo, 13, 36
Torre de la Parada, 45
"Two Young Men at a Meal," 21

Vandyck, 12
Venice, 32, 40
"Venus," 23, 69, 75, 76, 78
Vienna Gallery, 23, 48, 78, 88
Villanueva, Juan de, 11

Wallace, Lady, 48
Wellington, Duke of, 18, 66
Westminster, Duke of, 48

Zurbaran, Francisco, 26

THE END

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